



Quarterly Newsletter

# 2020 Annual Report

Have we made a difference?

What have we achieved?

What is happening next?

How are we spending the budget?

# Welcome



## Annual Report 2020-21



Councillor Doug Lawson Mayor and Councillor Scott Jackson Deputy Mayor

In this issue, we reflect over the last year and look at future opportunities for Penrith Town Council. It has certainly been an unusual Mayoral year. It has been a huge honour and privilege for both of us to serve the Town as Council Chair and Mayor and Vice Chair and Deputy Mayor for the last two years.

## The Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's Reflections

This last year has been a year like no other in which the world has and continues to struggle with Covid-19. 2020 has been a turbulent, worrying, and sad year for us all, but Penrith Town Council could not be prouder of the Penrith Community and how they have all pulled together. Although the end is in sight it is really important at this time that we continue to comply with all measures, only going out when necessary, wearing a face covering when out, washing our hands and maintaining that 2m distance to reduce the spread. The NHS has done a brilliant job in tough circumstances and the Eden Primary Care Network are doing a fantastic job getting through the vaccination cohorts. As the author, Charlie Mackesy says 'We are tired but the dawn is coming so hold on'. We have had to adapt learn new skills with delivery shopping, click and collect, technology as we go on line for yoga, dance lessons, meetings and family gatherings, with the newest most used phrase being 'you're on mute'.

This year has seen many people volunteer to help their neighbourhoods and we applaud you all. Where there was not a local support network, the Town Council worked with the Eden Resilience Group to coordinate local volunteers to support vulnerable people with shopping and prescription collections. We have to say a huge thank you to everyone that has volunteered all key workers, shop workers, school staff, and the Fell Runner minibus who have given up their time to assist with deliveries. We are still available and continue to provide support as best we can in partnership with our local churches, groups, volunteers, businesses, Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council and although our staff are working from home, they can be contacted should you need to do so by email or phone.

Our website and social media have continuously informed the community to help address concerns and we have worked with business representatives to provide information about local businesses that have stayed open to enable people to shop and buy locally. The Town Council along with the BID and Chamber of Trade successfully lobbied Eden District Council to allow free parking in off street car parks to help essential workers who had to come into town to work. This support was greatly appreciated and we have to thank the District Council for allowing free parking until the end of December. There is no doubt our shops and business have had a hard time and will continue to do so for some time to come. Business owners have worked hard to make premises Covid secure and some have changed their way of operating to offer a take away service or click and collect whilst being closed. It is more important than ever to support local businesses and 'Shop Local'. We have some wonderful businesses, many of whom stepped up to provide home delivery during the first lock down, and they really do deserve our support.



Over the last year, we donated £3,000 to Penrith Foodbank and helped primary school children who did not have access to stationery at home by purchasing 400 craft bags. We purchased paper, pens, pencils, scissors, rubbers, glue and books with support from grants from The Cumbria Community Action Fund, Cumbria County Council and Barnardos. These bags were delivered by volunteers from the Fell Runner Community Transport Service to school and direct to some families.

We were looking forward to proving the community with a large free family event in May to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day. After so much planning, it was disappointing to have to cancel the event, which we had organised with Brougham Hall Wartime Weekend, Penrith Lions and Penrith Rotary. However, we were able to move The Cry for Peace Around the World and the Nations Toast online by creating a video and we thank them for their enthusiastic involvement.



Cumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom also rightly cancelled their events however; there was still some amazing work by local people who continued to make Penrith bloom during the year.

Throughout the year, we continued to engage with community groups and regularly updated the Penrith in Bloom social media pages.

We have also provided grant funding and/or Officer support to help with projects and initiatives when required. Stomping Ground developed a Nature Trail for us that provided work sheets for families to complete as they did their daily walk during the first lock down. We also commissioned a film to highlight the work of volunteers and others in town to act as a record of 2020 and the efforts to keep Penrith blooming during Covid. The film has captured Penrith's strong community spirit, volunteer determination and peoples' genuine love for the town and one another. The film can be found on our website and is an inspiring watch.

Despite no onsite judging taking place and with the aid of the film documenting their work, the Community Gardeners received an amazing 15 awards in 2020, including the overall 'Outstanding' Award from Cumbria in Bloom for everything they have done during a very difficult year.



The 'Friends of Penrith Railway Station received an RHS Certificate of Recognition. The Community Gardeners also received an award for Station of the Year and the Town Council received a recognition certificate for the support we give to our community groups .Other community projects have been developed during the year such as a Community Garden on a formerly derelict area of common ground at Ullswater Community College. Teachers support the project with local volunteers and the Team from Stomping Ground. The Town Council were delighted to be able to provide support and funding for a tarpaulin that has been used as a shelter in the Community Garden so work and activities could continue during adverse weather.





A sunny Remembrance Day was also very different, as church services were not permitted, however it was important that we marked the day to remember those who lost their lives in conflicts across the world. Representatives Penrith organisations that normally attend the civic service and parade, were invited to lay a wreath. A short but poignant section of the day was live streamed onto our social media when, at 11am the church bell tolled whilst the Last Post played by Chris Form from Penrith Town Band and Rev David Sergeant read out the citation which was followed by Reveille. Trudie Smith, who donated her time to the Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes, took photos of all those laying wreaths uploaded to social media to mark the occasion.

Christmas was quickly up on us and hope for a Christmas with our families. Again, we had to arrange this occasion slightly differently. The Council were grateful to Penrith Lions Club and Penrith Business Improvement District who installed the Christmas Lights and the Christmas tree in the Cornmarket area. Thanks to Usbar (Amey) who installed and removed the tree this year, as COVID-19 restrictions prevented the Lions volunteers from doing so.

We were pleased to support Eden Valley Artistic Network's Window Wanderland in Penrith that was part of the national Window Wanderland project. It ran from the start of December and finished at the start of March. Free creative packs were made available for anyone who wanted to take part and a local musician or band could be heard via posters with QR codes in local business windows.

We hope that on your walks you enjoyed the sights of windows that had been transformed into magical scenes.



We would like to acknowledge the amazing contribution of Cameron Stewart. In December 2020, he launched his Christmas Campaign to give every resident and member of staff in the three care homes in Penrith a card and gift at Christmas. He collected gifts and donations from individuals and businesses and with the surplus gifts, he raised money to provide extra treats for residents and staff. He also received a letter from HM Queen acknowledging what he had done. Not content with resting on his laurels, he went on to campaign for people to make 3422 cards to the staff in Carlisle and Penrith Hospitals and Penrith Health Centre. However, the generosity of the public has meant that homemade cards were delivered to staff all the hospitals and NHS sites in Cumbria.

Penrith Town Council's Youth Advisory Panel has been established since 2019 and discusses issues important to themselves and other young people in the town and the wider world. The main aim of the panel is to bring about greater benefits for young people to Penrith Town Council's decision-making.

During January 2020, the Youth Advisory Panel worked with Penrith Leisure Centre and Cumbria County Council to organise an online survey to gather youth views on what young people felt about Penrith. The survey's aimed to encourage feedback on a range of topics; advantages and disadvantages of living in the town, shopping, local transport, cultural activities, sports, pastimes, affordability of things to do, challenges and reasons for not getting involved in local activities, mental health, loneliness, drugs and alcohol and climate change. Information from the analysis will feed into the development of the Town Council's Strategies. The Survey outcomes were shared with Lancaster University and the University of Cumbria to help them triangulate data in their Youth Needs Evaluation. It was also shared with Penrith Leisure Centre who wanted to identify what leisure activities young people would like in Penrith, and with the Community Development Team at Cumbria County Council and Cumbria County Council's 'Young Peoples Working Group.' The hope is that during 2021, there will be scope for more young people to join the Youth Advisory Panel and support our other important work and projects such as climate change.



# PENRITH A CARBON NEUTRAL TOWN

After declaring a climate emergency, the Council developed a broad overarching strategy to help Penrith on its journey to carbon neutrality. Importantly, it set out the Council's ambition to engage and work with the people of Penrith to bring about the kind of transformation that the crisis demands.

In January 2021, the Council agreed to resource the strategy and a dedicated officer will be appointed in the spring to lead the project delivery and a grant fund will be available to encourage and support local green projects.

The Council also recognised that as a critical first step to empower the community to play a role in tackling climate change, it had itself to act as an exemplar to other organisations and businesses. Officers and Members will attend Carbon Literacy training and encourage other organisations to do likewise. Carbon Literacy training provides awareness about the causes of and solutions to the climate crisis for the individual and organisations.

The Council hopes to inspire others to undertake similar green initiatives and is keen to collaborate with like-minded people and groups. Penrith Town Council is a member of the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership (ZCCP), which involves nearly 70 organisations spanning the public, private and third sectors with the aim of delivering a coordinated partnership emission reduction programme to bring about a zero-carbon Cumbria. The project has been awarded £2.5 million from the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund, for a five-year Zero Carbon Cumbria project. Eleven of the organisations in the ZCCP, including Penrith Action from Community Transition (PACT), will be involved in directly delivering elements of the Lottery-funded project and the whole partnership will be involved in wider decarbonisation programmes in order to reach the county's zero-carbon goal. This has been developed by Cumbria Action for Sustainability and their hard work and passion must be acknowledged

This gives a flavour of the things that the Town Council has been involved with but it is not an exhaustive list.



We are working with stakeholders to support the recovery of Penrith and we encourage everyone to support local businesses, as they start re-opening. 2020/21 continued to see the Council seek to manage its assets as effectively as possible. During the summer of 2020 the Town Council installed improved inclusive play facilities at Fairhill. We are keen to continue our work of improving community assets. We now own Thakka Beck Field, which is used for informal recreation, and connects the A686 with Tynefield Drive. Northern Gas Networks are in the process of installing utilities underneath part of the field as part of wider infrastructure improvements across Penrith. When this is completed, we will explore options with the community on the improvements they may wish to see to the field to improve access and informal recreation.

We are about to start improvements in one of our allotment sites that has been experiencing flooding problems for a number of years. We will be working closely with members from The Penrith Allotment Association to deliver the project.

Partnership working is essential to Penrith's future growth and success. In 2019, the Penrith Town Working Group was established to bring together local authorities, key stakeholders and partners to identify and deliver projects that are of benefit to the town. From this partnership the outturn from the Penrith Parking and Movement Study, is progressing to develop a timeline of projects, identify funding opportunities, and to create a communication plan that will ensure that residents are consulted and kept up to date with developments.

A group has been established to scope and plan the proposed Cycling and Movement interventions and create a LCWIP (Local Cycling Walking and Movement Infrastructure Plan) for Penrith with workshops and consultation being held in the next few months. A communication, marketing and branding for Penrith group will continue to work with partners to promote and share key messages about recovery and reopening and we are working with partners and stakeholders for the Borderlands Place Programme to create a Place Plan for Penrith. This collaborative approach is bringing together all three levels of local government, key stakeholders and most importantly residents. Our approach is one that is being seen as an example of good practice and is being duplicated within the County.

The Council will be looking ahead to the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation and is preparing itself to positively engage with partners in the months ahead. With the potential onset of local government reorganisation, the Council resolved at its meeting of Full Council on the 30 November to again state its expression of interest in the devolution of a range of assets and services from the District Council and we very much hope that devolution will recommence when a decision is made.

The Town Council looks forward to 2021/22 and working with the town's businesses, Community Gardeners, volunteers, local groups and residents to highlight our beautiful town and to continue to making a difference. We would like to thank you all, our community, our Councillors and our officers.



Each year the Town Council considers its budget for the forthcoming year to enable the Council to deliver its business plan. The business plan sets out the Council's priorities. You can view the plan on the town council website.

The budget allows the Council to provide and maintain assets and services such as improvements to playgrounds at Fairhill, clean bus shelters and benches which are in good order and safe to use.



In 21/22 in recognition of the difficulty communities were facing due to the pandemic the Council agreed not raise the budget. The past twelve months have been difficult for both the Council and its community. We have had to adapt to new ways of working to keep our services running and to play our part in supporting the Town's residents during the pandemic. While many of the activities that we sponsor and assist with grants have not been able to proceed, we have successfully completed a major improvement scheme to the play area at Fairhill and are progressing an Arts and Cultural Strategy.

Although the effects of the pandemic will continue to affect next year, the proposed budget for 2021/22 provides the framework for the Council to continue the progress it has made since its inception and enables it to plan for a sustainable financial future. The proposed funding will give the Council the resources and capacity to deliver both existing services and new developments that will benefit our residents and visitors.

In May 2019, the Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and it has developed a strategy to make Penrith carbon neutral by 2030. The budget provides £35,300 for the initial costs of delivering this exciting initiative, including the creation of an in-house specialist officer post dedicated to Climate Change. A further £18,500 of new finance will be directed towards implementing the recommendations of the Arts and Cultural Strategy, together with projects and initiatives to benefit the Town.

Since its inception, the Town Council has successfully taken over several assets and services from Eden District Council. The Council continues to discuss with the district council the further transfer of assets and services and we intend to play a key role in the expected re-organisation of local government and welcome its challenges.

Next year's proposed precept of £450,069 represents a nil increase in Council Tax. Given the problems of the past year, we feel that an increase would be inappropriate and have managed our finances to meet that aim. A typical household in Penrith, with a property valued in Band B, will see the Town Council's full Council Tax maintained at £64.63, representing about £1.24 per week. The Town Council's share of the overall Council Tax bill is about 4%, however we believe that we have a far greater impact on the quality of life in Penrith than this would suggest.

Over the coming five years, the Climate Change Strategy will require a total investment of around £189,000. To ensure that this will be affordable, a robust and sustainable financial plan has been developed, based on modest rises in Council Tax, which will grow our services and increase reserves to improve our resilience.

The budget process involves a good deal of work and I would like to thank Councillor Burgin, the members of the Finance Committee and Council Committees and officers for their contributions in developing the budget.

The budget enables the Council to continue providing quality services for the Town and for it to develop its priorities from a sound financial footing.

The tax calculations in the proposed budget are based on a provisional Council Taxbase of 5,416.64 for 2021/22 obtained from Eden DC. This represents a decrease of around 1% from the 2020/21 figure, understood to be due to more households being entitled to reductions ("rebates") in their Council Tax bills as a result of the pandemic.

The current year's Band D Council Tax is £83.09 per property, which would remain unchanged under the budget proposals, although the lower taxbase will reduce the overall income and the Council's precept.

Total outturn expenditure for 2020/21 of £422,574 is forecast to decrease by £68,880 from the Approved Budget, mainly due to the inability to deliver services due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The major differences can be summarised as follows:

<b>Expenditure per Approved Budget 2020/21</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
		<b>491,454</b>
Net reduction in Planning Committee expenditure	(7,000)	
Underspending on Town Projects growth item	(15,000)	
Creation of Covid-19 Response budget	20,000	
Reduced take up of Events Grants	(20,000)	
Return of 2019/20 Greening grant from Penrith BID	(6,300)	
Underspending of Community Grants budget	(22,000)	
Reduced expenditure on Community Engagement	(14,330)	
• Creation of interim Climate Change budget	6,500	
April 2020 staff pay award lower than budgeted	(2,520)	
Reduced Member and Officer Training and Conference costs	(4,670)	
Additional net IT costs, including replacement printer/photocopier	2,000	
Amendments to Website for cookie consents	1,450	
Net decrease in Other Overheads	(1,320)	
Reduction of Contingency budget to part-year provision.	(3,500)	
Other minor variations (net)	(2,190)	
		(68,880)
<b>Forecast Outturn Expenditure 2020/21</b>		<b>422,574</b>

The precept for 2021/22 is £450,069; the decrease of £4,164 from the 2020/21 figure can be explained as follows:

	£	£
<b>2020/21 Precept</b>		<b>454,233</b>
Net reductions in Planning Committee (£5,000) and CCEG (£3,000) expenditure	(8,000)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of one-off addition to Town Projects budget</li> </ul>	(15,000)	
Ongoing budget for Covid-19 Response	5,000	
Removal of one-off budget for preparation of Arts & Cultural Strategy	(7,500)	
Re-assessment of Corporate Communications budget	(1,830)	
Staffing:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over-provision for April 2020 pay award (£2,660)</li> <li>Anticipated 1.0% pay award April 2021 £2,380</li> <li>Incremental advances £5,180</li> <li>Re-assessment of Conference costs (£1,500)</li> </ul>	3,400	
Reduced Members' Training costs	(1,020)	
Reduction in Contingency provision	(3,500)	
2021/22 Allowance for Growth Items	53,800	
Increase in contribution from General Reserve	(27,883)	
Other minor variations (net)	(1,631)	
		(4,164)
<b>Proposed Precept 2021/22 (provisional)*</b>		<b>450,069</b>

We try to be transparent and open about how we spend our budget. If you need further information, please contact us or view our website where you can view monthly payments and finance reports.



Tel: 01768 899 773

Email: [office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:office@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk)

If you wish to raise any matters concerning Penrith this can be done by contacting the Town Council at:

Penrith Town Council,  
Unit 1, Church House  
19-24 Friargate  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
CA11 7XR

Editor: Town Clerk

## Together We Can Make a Difference

NAME	DIRECT LINE	EMAIL
<b>General Enquiries</b>	01768 899773	office@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Viv Tunnadine Town Clerk</b>	01768 425851	Townclerk@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Ros Richardson Deputy Town Clerk</b>	01768 425854	deputyTownclerk@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Paul Foote Solicitor</b>	01768 899773	legal@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Carol Grey Economic Development Officer</b>	01768 425853	economicdevelopmentofficer@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Jack Jones Responsible Finance Officer</b>	01768 425852	rfo@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Ian Parker Services &amp; Contracts Officer</b>	01768 425998	scmanager@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk
<b>Dr Anna Malina Community Engagement Officer</b>	01768 425997	ceo@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk

Interviews with the Town Clerk and officers by appointment only.

**We write monthly editorials about Penrith Town Council in our local free magazine which is posted throughout Eden to nearly 16,000 households.**

**To find out more and look at past editions please click below:**

<http://www.cumbrianlocal.co.uk/previous-issues>

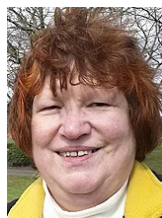
Whilst every effort was made to ensure the information in this newsletter was correct at the time of going to print, the Town Council cannot accept legal responsibility for any errors, omissions, nor can they accept responsibility for editorial contributions.



The Town Council is made up of 15 Councillors. They represent the six wards of Penrith Councillors are elected for four years and will be in place until 2023. Being a Town Councillor is a voluntary unpaid role. Penrith Town Councillors are listed below. Their full contact details are available on the Town Council website: [www.penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](http://www.penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Doug Lawson  
Carleton Ward  
**Council Chair**  
07969 481508  
[cldr.lawson@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.lawson@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Margaret Clark  
Penrith South ward  
07732 704133  
[cldr.clark@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.clark@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Scott Jackson  
Penrith North ward  
**Council vice Chair**  
07920 408 094  
[cldr.jackson@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.jackson@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Stephen Clarke  
Carleton ward  
0788 536 1822  
[cldr.clarke@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.clarke@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Pategill ward – Vacant



Councillor Jonathan Davies  
Penrith West ward  
01768 800 220  
[cldr.Davies@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.Davies@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Roger Burgin  
Penrith South ward  
01768 8941  
[cldr.burgin@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.burgin@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Paul Donald  
Penrith North Ward  
07905 423 772  
[cldr.donald@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cldr.donald@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor James Fallows  
Penrith East ward  
07738 525 949  
[cllr.Fallows@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.Fallows@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Charlie Shepherd  
Penrith East ward  
01768 840 227  
[cllr.Shepherd@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.Shepherd@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Nicola Hawkins  
Penrith East ward  
01768899773  
[cllr.Hawkins@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.Hawkins@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Mike Shepherd  
Penrith North ward  
01768 868 975  
[cllr.mikeshpherd@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.mikeshpherd@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Ron Kenyon  
Penrith North Ward  
01768 864728  
[cllr.kenyon@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.kenyon@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Hilary Snell  
Penrith West ward  
01768 899773  
[cllr.Snell@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.Snell@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)



Councillor Dave Knaggs  
Penrith West ward  
01768 899773  
[cllr.Knaggs@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk](mailto:cllr.Knaggs@penrithTownCouncil.co.uk)