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RISCA TOWN COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT No. 7 for 2021



Risca Town Council's summer basket display. This basket was located outside the Pontymister, Risca Cenotaph Garden, Tredegar Road, Risca

Risca Town Council's daffodils display in Tredegar Park, Risca



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The Town Council's Aims:

- To promote the Town, its people, businesses and amenities
- To provide support to the Town to make it a prosperous and enjoyable place to live and work by maintaining and improving its well-being


Introduction

Welcome to this seventh Annual Report of Risca Town Council.

I hope that you will enjoy reading about the work of Risca Town Council and the people we serve.

I would like to thank the elected members of the Council for their hard work throughout the year.

I would also like to thank the many individuals and organisations who have worked with us to improve the well-being of the community of Risca Town.



Bob Campbell, Risca Town Clerk

Email: clerk2riscatc@gmail.com or clerk@riscatc.uk

About Risca Town Council

Risca (Welsh:Rhisga) is a town of approximately 11,500 people in south-east Wales, within the Caerphilly County Borough and the historic boundaries of Monmouthshire. To follow its county borough Ward boundaries it is split into a division of East and West.

The Council was set up as Risca West Community Council alongside the neighbouring Risca East Community Council following local elections in late 2012.

Its inaugural meeting of eight elected Councillors was held in February 2013. The Caerphilly county borough council recognised the Council as having a 'Town' status in late 2013 and the name was duly changed to Risca Town Council to reflect this.

The Town Council area has a population of over 6,000 within its boundary that includes the Wards of DanyGraig, Ty Isaf Fields, Town and Fernlea and Pontymister Lower.

The Council is made up of eight elected Town Councillors and one staff member, its Town Clerk.

The Council has steadily progressed with providing its Council business and local services where necessary since April 2013.

Details of the elected members and how to contact them are available at www.riscatowncouncil.org.uk. Notices of meetings, agendas, reports and minutes can also be viewed here, along with the governance, policy documents and other information about the Council and its business.

The Council derives almost all of its funds from its precept. That is an additional amount which is added to Council Tax bills based upon the Council's estimated expenditure. For the 2020/2021 financial year it had an annual precept of £48,000. The Council has estimated that it needs to spend the majority of this amount on its service provision, commitments, local Projects and local donations. From the outset in 2013 the Council

accepted the financial advice from its recognised partners that at least 30% of its annual income needs to be saved for future election purposes and as a Council reserve.

Further information about the Council's finances, including its annual accounts is on the website.

This Report includes in Appendix 1 a summary of the Mayor's year in office and Appendix 2 the Council's services and Projects that are delivered to all age groups in a variety of forms from Christmas Festive lighting to summer flower baskets. These events contribute to the well-being of the Risca townsfolk.

The Way Forward for a Resilient and Competent Risca Town Council

What we think we did well:

Our members closely monitor the way the Council is run to ensure we use our resources wisely.

We have strong links with Risca East Community Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Gwent Police and our local businesses to help contribute to the continued regeneration of Risca.

We keep neighbourhood services matters under particular scrutiny. We encourage positive attitudes to sustainability and environmental issues, especially amongst our young people.

What we think we could do better:

We will continue to look at ways of working with the townsfolk and local businesses in our community to encourage sustainability. We will work with our partners to make the best use of our resources.

We will seek the inclusion of our younger townsfolk at our council meetings and events organising sub-committees.

We want to encourage more members of the public to attend our events. We will make this a priority for the future.

We will strive to keep our working practices environmentally friendly, supporting sustainable approaches to recycling, waste management and use of resources.

Risca Town together with the Town and Community Councils of Caerphilly County Borough commit to working in an environmentally friendly way, to take into account the environmental impact of any goods or services we source, to promote reduce, reuse and recycle programmes, to look at contributing to sustainable planting and preserving biodiversity, to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and foster relationships between the community, local businesses

and the local authority as to how we can work together to find shared solutions. We will take into account those biodiversity concerns and requirements as set out by Welsh Government in all our decision making.

Finally, the health crisis has dominated all our lives and has meant that Government emergency laws and lockdowns has seriously curtailed our intended community projects again for 2021. This pandemic has added to these changing times for Town and Community Councils. We face many new challenges and opportunities. It is important that we are ready to face these challenges to be Fit for the Future via a number of 'competency' tests that are emerging to help us determine how well equipped we are to meet the challenges ahead. These tests will bring more consistency to the sector with higher standards of governance and financial management. These tests may include: a democracy test, a capability test and a governance test. The Council already has sound financial management and internal control systems in place, regularly publishes our agendas, minutes and accounts on our website and is contactable by email and the social media of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Since May 2020 to March 2022 the Council has managed to continue its essential business via remote virtual meetings. We acknowledge the health crisis has not ended but we are now allowed by Welsh Government to return to 'hybrid' in person and virtual meetings together and with the community.

Appendix 1 - Mayor/Chairperson's Report

I am proud to have been elected Mayor/Chairperson and have very much enjoyed representing the Town Council for a first term over the last health crisis affected 12 months.

We have a strong team of Councillors who together with our Clerk all share the same common interest of improving our community. We continue to welcome suggestions from fellow residents and will always strive to improve the Town and the services available to us all. We continued to enjoy a very good working relationship with our County Borough Councillors, Bob Owen and Ross Whiting through 2021.

There are of course many individuals and organisations who have worked with us to improve the well-being of Risca Town and it is great to see so many local residents both young and old taking an interest in our activities and services.

During the last year, unfortunately due to the pandemic and its enforced lockdowns, we were only able to carry out our limited, main projects of summer flowers and hanging baskets and Christmas festive lighting and Christmas Tree lighting. We added 8 street planters, two 4-tier planters plus an extra 7 hanging basket sites in the summer of 2021. We also added to our Festive lighting project with 10 additional street lighting festive lanterns plus a large lantern for the Tredegar Park. Also we held a Christmas Window competition and we continued supporting the Save Risca Toilets local charity. We also funded a new defibrillator to the Risca Royal British Legion.

Both the summer flowers/baskets and Festive lighting in 2021 were again very successful projects.

As the health crisis allows we look forward to restarting our other projects in 2022 to hopefully include:

- A Queen's Platinum Jubilee Summer Fair – tea party with live music
- Bands in the Park – Sunday afternoon with local brass bands
- Armistice Concert and events

Finally, we have supported local charities and organisations with donations during the year. It has been a privilege to support the wonderful work that they do. Those included are:

- Air Ambulance Wales
- Risca Royal British Legion
- Ukraine - 6 medical back packs
- MacMillan Charity
- Moriah Church's Save Risca Toilets charity

Councillor Mike Parker

Mayor of Risca Town Council – May 2021 to April 2022

The following photographs are from some of the projects the Council carried out in 2021:

One of two new 4-tier planters presented by Risca Town Council for its summer flowers and planters project



Risca Town Council's summer baskets project



Risca Town Council contributed to the Pontymister Memorial Garden works completed by Risca Royal British Legion



Risca Town's summer planter at the Mill Street roundabout



Risca Town's Festive Lighting and Tree project in Tredegar Park, Risca.

(The Town Council wish to thank Caerphilly county borough council's Parks Department for their permission to use the park)



Risca Town's Festive Lighting and Tree project



This is a photo of the bluebells on the Ocherwyth mountainside just outside Risca Town.



Appendix 2 - List of Projects for 2021



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2021 All Projects with Budget amounts

Note – all projects were dependent on the current health crisis

Project No.	Project Name	Description & Comments	Amount Paid	Amount Pledged
1	Summer Fair? All events are Coronavirus and Lockdown dependent	Cancelled due to the health crisis. Hopefully resumed in 2022		7500
2	Bands in the Park – Event	Hopefully for summer 2022		250 250
3	Summer flower baskets and new planters June to Sep 2021	Local contractor to 1/ purchase and erection of new baskets and brackets 2/ erect and maintain summer baskets on lighting columns and watering 3/ to fill and maintain summer planters 4/ to fill and maintain autumn planters	3706 5827 2760 880	4400
4	Tredegar Park Toilets Block opening by local charity Town contribution	All year round – health crisis dependent	2000	3000
5	Armistice 2021 Concert 1/ 11.00 am Thurs 11 Nov	Risca Town and Risca East joint concert Cancelled JOINT EVENT	300 37	1400 100

	2/ 10.30 am Sunday 14 Nov			700
	3/ RBL request for a new flagpole at Darren Gdns			900
	4/ RBL request for power supplies at both Gardens			4000
	5/ RBL request for new water supply			?
6	Christmas 2021 Festive lighting and Christmas Trees in Park plus lighting and barriers from 25 Nov to 7 Jan 2022	1/ new units 2/ new tree lights 3/ contract 4/ power supply	3800 350	5000
7	Christmas 2021 window dressing	3 prizes		300
8	Winter Fair or Pantomime	Cancelled due the health crisis		7500
9	CARRIED OVER from 20/21 - Resiting of CCBC's street planters near Pontymister Rdbt plus new large planters	6 resited plus 2 static at Park gates Plus 2 new large planters that were purchased in Feb 202. All filled and maintained	1728 1360	2100
9	POSSIBLE - Wild flower planting	5 sites to be again asked for to CCBC Parks for spring/summer 2022 plus on the A467 verges – due to the health crisis POSTPONED in 2021		300
A				
B				