

Taunton Town Council Manifesto

Thanks to the work of our Liberal Democrat team, Taunton will once again have its own town council for the first time in over 50 years.

Our team has an ambitious vision to put the heart back into Taunton and a Liberal Democrat Town Council would deliver this for you, working closely with our colleagues on the Lib Dem controlled Somerset Council to improve community well-being whilst delivering the best possible services to meet local needs.



Liberal
Democrats

What does a town council do?

Town and parish councils are the first level of local government and they encourage and deliver community action.

Their main responsibilities include:

- Open spaces, footpaths and allotments
- Transport schemes and bus shelters
- Community centres and grants
- Community safety and police liaison
- Parks, play areas and equipment
- Festivals, events and tourism promotion
- Traffic calming measures and street lighting
- Street cleaning, public toilets and litter bins

A Liberal Democrat Taunton Town Council will:

Invest in the town centre

We will:

- Appoint a permanent Town centre manager.
- Replicate the Wellington "Pop up Shop" model in Taunton to support community groups, local charities and small businesses.
- Improve the Christmas lights provision whilst continuing the good work of SW&T Council to revitalise our Christmas market.

With our partners, we will:

- Develop proposals to improve East Reach as a gateway to the town centre.
- Seek to improve litter collection in the town.
- Install defibrillators in the town centre and elsewhere in the community.
- Create a strategy to improve the town centre in partnership with local businesses.
- Work to improve the town centre environment for all shoppers, improving access for disabled people, and introducing pedestrianisation where appropriate.

Provide for young people

We will:

- Set aside a £100,000 budget for the purpose of providing better youth services, activities and facilities. This will be consulted with the public as to how best to spend this money.
- Create a strategy to bring all the play parks up to a decent and safe standard, and consult with local parents and children to consider what other provision may be necessary, including accessibility.

Strengthen and support our community

We will:

- Ensure that no problem falls between the cracks. Whether it be a broken bench or a damaged bus shelter, we will actively seek to resolve all issues which you bring to our attention.
- Cherish all of Taunton's communities and continue to positively respect and preserve its distinctive neighbourhoods, particularly those of the former parishes coming within the new Town Council area.
- Investigate whether further community wardens are needed in addition to the existing provision.
- Establish a working group to look into improving accessibility around the town for the disabled, elderly, vulnerable and parents with pushchairs.
- Fund the filling of grit bins where necessary around the town.
- Reinvigorate Taunton's links with its twin towns, Lisieux and Königslutter.

With our partners, we will:

- Ensure that public toilet facilities are up to modern standards and working with the current maintenance provider, make sure that they are kept in a good condition.
- Lobby developers to ensure that new developments have adequate community facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensure that Somerset Council is made aware of local concerns about relevant planning applications, in order to serve the best interests of Taunton residents.
- Identify Broadband problem areas in Taunton and work to improve them.
- Set up a "Share library" – where you sign up to borrow items that you need, from power tools to kitchen equipment, as is currently being run in Frome.
- Help address the homeless situation in our town.

Promote walking, cycling and bus use

We will:

- Create a Transport Committee which will consult with residents over their local bus routes and seek to lobby First and Somerset Council on your behalf.
- Undertake an audit of all bus shelters in the Taunton area.
- Recognise Somerset Bus Partnership as a partner.

With our partners, we will:

- Work with Somerset Council on the formation of the new Transport Hub at the former bus station site.
- Seek urgent improvements and repairs of bus shelters in Taunton and work with Somerset Bus Partnership and Somerset Council to improve these facilities and look at future ownership.
- Work with Somerset Council and Taunton Area Cycling Campaign to improve Taunton's pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

Work with the Police to reduce criminal activity in Taunton

We will:

- Liaise with local police in order to receive regular updates on criminal activity in Taunton and to pass the concerns of local residents on to them.
- Work with the police and Somerset Council to install speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) on roads around Taunton where residents are concerned about speeding.
- Promote community engagement with the police, via school visits, pop up stalls, etc.

Protect and improve our local environment

We will:

- Declare a climate and ecological emergency with the aim of establishing TTC as an environmentally supportive council focussed on improving the quality of life in the town.
- Promote our Garden Town status and ensure that demonstrable benefits are communicated to residents.
- Own a number of parks around the town. They already benefit the local environment, but in addition to their maintenance we will implement further measures, such as further tree planting and nature-friendly planting where appropriate.
- Examine the demand for additional outdoor exercise equipment in our open spaces.
- Sign up to plastic Free Communities.
- Investigate roads and open spaces that are unadopted and/or impacting communities and look at their potential to be brought under public ownership.
- Support and encourage both new and existing litter picking groups.
- Keep management companies under scrutiny to ensure that new developments are well-maintained.
- Investigate replicating the "Childrens Wood" by planting the same amount of trees of children born in Taunton in a designated year.
- Continue to open up our stunning river front and canal paths to the public and revive the Tone Conservators.

With our partners, we will:

- Promote environmental awareness and sustainable living through working with existing community organisations.
- Increase tree planting in Taunton by working with Somerset council and other partners.
- Revamp the solar walk along the Bridgwater and Taunton canal in collaboration with neighbouring parish councils
- Lobby the government and Wessex Water to clean up Taunton's rivers and waterways.
- Work with Somerset Council to protect grass verges from vehicle damage.
- Work with Somerset Council to introduce safer, more environmentally friendly 20mph speed limits for streets throughout Taunton where people live, work, shop and play.

Energise Arts and Culture in Taunton

We will:

- Support and promote community festivals, markets and events.
- Promote the Arts Hub, theatre, museum, live music and comedy venues and galleries and campaign for a 1,000+ seat multi-purpose venue.

With our partners, we will:

- **Work collaboratively with Arts Taunton, CicCic, Genius Events, Go Create, Taunton Brewhouse, community arts groups and enterprises and partners to improve our arts culture and entertainment in the town, support our creative community and make Taunton a cultural destination.**

Champion Taunton's business community

We will:

- **Prioritise a positive relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce.**
- **Lobby our local MP to have business rates on High Street businesses scrapped.**
- **Audit Taunton's public buildings and open spaces and seek to take over those which can be put to better use for our local business community sector.**
- **Liaise with business leaders over plans to improve the town centre.**

We will communicate with you!

We will:

- **Publicise our work through social media, a regular newsletter and through existing local publications.**
- **Consult and liaise regularly with you, the residents of Taunton, to make our town vibrant and successful in every possible way.**

