

Chairman's Report 2026

Good evening everyone. It is my pleasure to present my Chairman's Report for the past year.

Looking back over the last twelve months, I can honestly say it has been one of the busiest and most rewarding years since I became Chair of the Talbot Village Residents' Association. If I had to describe the past year in one word, it would be partnership.

Talbot Village is a very special place. We are fortunate to live in a beautiful community surrounded by heathland, whilst also benefiting from having two universities on our doorstep. One of my ambitions has always been to ensure residents are able to enjoy the best of both worlds: protecting everything that makes our village unique whilst embracing opportunities that genuinely benefit our community.

None of what we achieve would be possible without people willing to give up their own time for others. I would therefore like to begin by thanking our committee members, volunteers and everyone who has supported the Association throughout the year. Your enthusiasm, ideas and willingness to get involved are what make this Association successful.

Building a Stronger Community

Our CommUNity programme, delivered in partnership with Bournemouth University, continues to go from strength to strength and remains one of the Association's greatest achievements. When we first discussed bringing residents and the University together through free educational talks, we hoped it would encourage greater understanding between the local community and the University. It has achieved so much more than that.

Over the past year we have hosted a wide variety of free events covering health and wellbeing, menopause, nutrition, meeting our local MP, meeting the Police and Crime Commissioner, emergency first aid and other fascinating subjects. These events have brought residents together with academics, professionals and community leaders in a relaxed and welcoming environment, whilst demonstrating the incredible expertise that exists on our doorstep.

One of the highlights was undoubtedly the free Basic Life Support and Defibrillator training delivered by Bournemouth University's paramedic lecturers. Thanks to their generosity, around sixty residents have now received practical life-saving training, giving them the confidence to respond should someone suffer a cardiac arrest.

This sits perfectly alongside the installation of our new community defibrillator. We have not simply installed a piece of equipment; we now have more people within our community with the skills and confidence to use it. That is something we should all be incredibly proud of.

Our social events have also continued to flourish. From bingo evenings to community gatherings, these occasions are about far more than fundraising. They help neighbours become friends, reduce isolation and strengthen the sense of belonging within our village. As Chair, there is nothing more satisfying than seeing residents who had never previously met now chatting together, supporting one another and becoming involved in village life.

Community Improvements

Alongside our events, we have continued working on practical improvements around the village. In addition to our new community defibrillator, new cycle racks have been installed and we have been working with BCP Council towards the addition of a planter.

Unfortunately, the planter has taken a little longer than anticipated. When the Council surveyed the proposed location, it became apparent that the area is on a slope and therefore unsuitable for a standard pre-made planter. A bespoke planter will now be required to accommodate the uneven surface. So it hasn't disappeared from our plans — it is simply proving slightly more complicated than we first thought!

These may appear relatively small projects individually, but they are tangible improvements identified locally and delivered for the benefit of our community.

Not every issue this year has been so positive.

Many residents have contacted us regarding BCP Council's decision to significantly reduce grass cutting across the borough as part of its cost-saving programme. Whilst we all understand the financial pressures facing local government, Talbot Village has particular circumstances that deserve recognition.

Living alongside protected heathland means longer grass creates ideal conditions for ticks, raising concerns for families, walkers and dog owners. Long grass also produces grass seeds which can cause painful injuries to dogs and often lead to expensive veterinary treatment. This is therefore not simply about appearance; it is about public health, animal welfare and ensuring our open spaces remain safe and enjoyable.

We have raised these concerns directly with the Council and will continue pressing for a more balanced approach which recognises the particular challenges faced by communities such as ours.

Representing Residents

Representing residents remains the core purpose of the Association and this year has demonstrated just how important it is to have an active residents' association speaking up for our community.

Throughout the year we have engaged with BCP Council, Bournemouth University, Talbot Village Trust, our local MP and other organisations on a wide range of issues. Sometimes that has meant working collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes and, at other times, challenging decisions or asking difficult questions where necessary.

One of our biggest successes was the campaign to retain the Number 36 bus service. Many residents will have seen media coverage suggesting that the campaign was led solely by local councillors. Whilst we welcomed everyone who supported the campaign, I am immensely proud of the contribution made by this Association and residents across Talbot Village.

Consultation forms were made available at the Premier Store, we encouraged residents to take part and delivered information explaining why responding was so important. We secured coverage in the Bournemouth Echo, spoke on local radio, arranged for local residents to appear on ITV Meridian and wrote to both our local MP and BCP Council setting out our concerns.

For many residents this was about far more than a bus route. It was about maintaining independence and access to healthcare, education and employment. Every completed consultation, conversation and letter helped demonstrate how important the Number 36 is to our village and, thankfully, the service was retained.

Another issue which continues to demand our attention is the future of our subway. Many of you will be aware that proposals have been put forward which could ultimately result in its closure and replacement with a surface crossing. The subway has served our community safely for decades and remains an important route linking the village with Bournemouth University, local schools, bus stops and nearby facilities.

Throughout the year we have continued making the case for its retention. I have written directly to BCP Council, challenged assumptions being made and highlighted the overwhelming support within our community for keeping this important asset.

However, this remains a work in progress. No final decision has yet been made and whilst we continue to engage constructively with the Council, we must be realistic that we may yet have a significant campaign ahead of us. Our objective is not simply to oppose change; it is to ensure decisions affecting Talbot Village are based on evidence, common sense and meaningful consultation with the people who actually live here.

Planning for the Future

Planning and future development have occupied a significant amount of the committee's time this year. Talbot Village is entering one of the most significant periods of change in its modern history.

Talbot Village Trust has published its 2035 Strategy, setting out its long-term vision for the village and confirming its intention to deliver the wider Talbot Quarter.

Residents will already be familiar with the approved Nuffield Health Hospital, but many may not realise that the wider Innovation Quarter currently has outline planning permission only. Whilst the principle of development has therefore been established, detailed proposals for individual phases will still need to come forward through future Reserved Matters applications.

Those proposals include Talbot Place, incorporating cafés, shops and public spaces, together with new homes, student accommodation, care facilities, commercial buildings and the new Heathland Support Area, which is expected to open in early 2027. We also understand that construction of the Nuffield Hospital is now anticipated to begin in mid-2027.

Given the scale of these plans and their potential impact on our community, we felt it was important that residents had an opportunity to hear directly from Talbot Village Trust and ask

questions about the future of the village. We therefore invited the Trust to attend a meeting with residents. Unfortunately, the invitation was declined on the basis that the Chief Executive was unavailable and that there was no one else considered suitable to attend in their place.

That was disappointing, particularly given the significance of the changes being proposed and the understandable questions residents have about what they will mean for our village. We remain very willing to engage constructively with the Trust and hope there will be opportunities for meaningful dialogue with residents as these plans progress.

Development can bring investment and new opportunities, but it must be accompanied by the right infrastructure and proper consideration of its impact on traffic, parking, healthcare, the environment and the character of our village.

Your committee will therefore continue to monitor every stage of these proposals, engage with those involved and, most importantly, ensure residents are kept informed as plans develop.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the year ahead, our priorities remain clear. We will continue expanding our successful CommUNlty programme with Bournemouth University, bringing more free talks, workshops and opportunities for residents to learn, meet one another and make use of the wealth of knowledge and expertise available locally.

We will continue delivering practical improvements around the village whilst maintaining pressure on the issues that matter to residents, including protecting our subway, challenging the reduction in grass cutting and scrutinising future development to ensure it is supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Above all, we will continue to represent you. That means celebrating good ideas and working collaboratively wherever we can, but it also means being prepared to ask questions and challenge decisions when we believe the interests of Talbot Village residents are not being properly considered.

There will undoubtedly be challenges ahead, but there are exciting opportunities too. The experiences of the past year, from retaining the Number 36 bus to expanding CommUNlty and providing life-saving equipment and training, show that local action really can make a difference.

Thank You

Before I finish, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to another successful year for the Association.

Firstly, my sincere thanks go to every member of our committee. I am incredibly fortunate to work alongside such a dedicated group of volunteers who freely give up their time, bring different ideas and skills to the table and care enormously about our village.

Thank you to Bournemouth University for continuing to be such a valued partner. The CommUNlty programme has become something that both the University and the village can be proud of, and I look forward to seeing it grow further over the coming year.

I would also like to thank our guest speakers, local businesses and organisations, our councillors, our MP and everyone who has worked positively with the Association during the year. We will not always agree on every issue, but constructive dialogue and a willingness to listen remain essential if we are to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

Finally, my biggest thank you goes to you, our residents. Thank you for attending our events, volunteering your time, supporting our campaigns, sharing your ideas and, most importantly, caring so deeply about Talbot Village.

I have always believed that a residents' association should do more than simply respond when something goes wrong. It should bring people together, create opportunities, improve the place in which we live and ensure residents have a genuine voice in its future.

The coming years will undoubtedly bring considerable change to Talbot Village. Some of it will be exciting and some will inevitably present challenges. Our job is to make sure that, through all of that change, the people who already call this wonderful village home are listened to and represented.

It remains a privilege to serve as your Chair, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all in the year ahead.

Thank you.