

TENBY CIVIC SOCIETY

Newsletter – Spring 2026

Hello again. This is our latest newsletter to try to keep you better & wider informed about challenging issues facing the town of Tenby's heritage. We hope you enjoy its contents and would welcome any comments, good or bad. You can get hold of us [here](#).

Tenby's Holiday Lettings

Welsh Government's requirement that holiday lettings must be for at least 182 days of the year for the property to qualify for Business rates, thus avoid the Council Tax premium, has stirred up some reaction. Quite a few holiday lets have been put up for sale in Tenby – some sold, some not. Planning studies suggested that these restrictions would not reduce house prices by much (5% in one study) so not many lower income locals would be able to afford still high prices. However, owners were given a 12 month period of no Council Tax Premium if their properties were for sale; only at the end of March this year will we find out if their efforts to sell were genuine.

Lower income locals' best chance is with the County Council's building new social rent housing. The opportunity for the County to buy existing houses and convert them to social rents would add to these opportunities inside existing settlements like Tenby. We have seen that some properties done up for holiday lets in Tenby were to a poorer standard (building layout, not furnishing); these are apparently acceptable for holiday makers, but would not be acceptable for long term renting. The Brin Hir housing is a couple of years' away; the County buying existing houses could help fill the gap.

Tourism Tax

Wales is set to introduce a visitor levy ("tourism tax") for overnight stays starting in April 2027, allowing local councils to charge £0.75 (campsites, hostels) – £1.30 (hotels, guest houses, self-catering) per person, per night to fund local services and infrastructure. This charge applies to both domestic and international tourists for stays of no more than 31 days. Preceding the levy, a new, mandatory Welsh Government Register will record all visitor accommodation providers in Wales. While the Register will be compulsory, it will be up to each council to adopt, or not, the levy. The Register will require entries from autumn 2026 (it isn't more specific).

Planning

The Executive Committee think it could be timely for the walled town to become a **Pedestrian Priority Area**. With only two roads in and two roads out, the walled town is an ideal location to prioritise pedestrians by reducing the current vehicle speed limit from 20mph to 10mph and making the inside of the walled town a pedestrian priority area:-

- movement for pedestrians would be easier and add to Tenby's relaxed character
- many of the streets have narrow pavements

- businesses often fill narrow pavements with advert 'A' boards making pedestrians walk in the road anyway.

In the past, Civic Society members were keen on a 20 mph limit and quite a lot wanted a 10mph zone. Now the town and its visitors are used to pedestrianisation, a year round pedestrian priority would not interrupt vehicle access into the walled town, as happens with the summer pedestrianisation, yet be closer to that summer welcoming, people friendly ambience.

- some businesses appear to have permission to part fill pavements with chairs and tables all year round

- unloading, service vehicles and residents could still have vehicle access

- the revised Highway Code gives pedestrians more priority e.g. when crossing roads at junctions they have priority over bicycles and vehicles turning in or out of the junctions.

- it is a small area so drivers would not lose much time

- low vehicle speeds reduce the seriousness of accidents to pedestrians; the accident record is already quite good.

Will Lidl get permission for an out of town "Tenby" store?

Lidl's planning application for a store near Park House is one of the best documented applications our Harry Gardiner has had to wade through. Lidl's proposal is for a typical type of "out of town" supermarket of the type that, with online retail, has shrunk and badly weakened town centres like Tenby. Lidl think About 25% of the new Lidl's trade would be taken from Tenby's food shops (Sainsbury, Tesco, Co-op, Londis and Post Office) at a time when Tenby's centre is losing other retail premises to cafes and restaurants, serving tourists. Pubs and clothes shops depend on tourists too. Lidl expects to draw the most of its trade from Pembroke Dock, particularly for once a week "trolley filler" customers.



The weaknesses in Lidl's application seem to be

a. mitigating the store's visual impact

b. managing extra turning traffic and

c. damage to retail centres like New Hedges, Tenby and Saundersfoot.

If refused, Lidl are likely to make a full appeal and the impact on other centres will be important - a field day for very technical data argument, with the case for a supermarket in the Kilgetty/Tenby area possibly resolving around a larger site in a more suitable location with less impact on existing centres. Would the future 300 residents of the Bryn Hir housing

estate be more likely to walk to Lidl than into Tenby to shop?

The good condition of, and lack of empty, properties in Tenby's centre despite the continuing loss of retail shops (like Poundland) reflects how important the tourist/visitor trade is in bringing 'missing' trade into Tenby. As well as out of town and online retail competition, Tenby's resident population is falling – by a tenth in the last decade. Is Tenby more a holiday centre than a town centre?

Inside the Town Walls

The latest plans are for a weather covering structure for the yard beside the Town Walls in the new Town Crier restaurant site (former Clarices Toy Shop). We regret this, as it will block views from inside the site of the inside of the town walls. The application suggests that the inside of the town walls is not a public space so structures close to the walls will not have a negative effect on the walls. Bluntly, the outside is important but the inside is not? The outside is an Ancient Monument but the inside isn't?

The Town Crier is a progressive scheme in the main but this step seems to degrade the town walls and repeat the many ways buildings in Tenby have blocked and ignored the visual value of the inside of the town walls.

Outside the Town Walls

There is a variety of signage on doorways in the Town Walls, none of which appears to have been given planning permission. Most of these fit in well with the walls, being fitted inside the doorways formed in the walls so of modest size and usually modest colours. Others are not inside the doorway but fit over the walls, and lack a style, size and position to match the other signage. Most premises owners understand the importance of the town walls and being visually respectful, but showing who they are and what is inside the walls in their premises. They didn't need us or the planners to work that out! We hope in due course the other signs can be altered to fit in better, read on...

Like the Town Crier, several premises have useful rear doorways in the Town Walls and like to have a way of advertising the premises inside, so several have neatly fitted their signs inside the top of their doorway, usually fixed to the doorframe. CADW generally prefers not to have signage attached to the walls – heritage plaques relating to the walls have to be secured into the mortar not the stones.

Premises like the Normandie pub have fitted their signs neatly inside the arch above their door, not covering any of the walls' stonework - discrete and fitting in well.

Other premises have square topped doorways with less room, so some have fixed signs covering the walls, not fitting inside the doorway, using fixing brackets from the door frames. These signs do not fit in as well as they cover part of the walls, do not match the doorway in size, so are discordant. They could better be fixed on the doors themselves – leaving the walls unobscured and telling passers-by what is through the door (as with the Rugby Club). See the illustrations below.



The Town Crier new premises are impressive, their sign on the Walls itself has the merit of showing a town crier and the name is a fitting tribute to "Yobbler" who was Tenby Town Crier and lived in the premises when a toy shop. Let's hope it can be positioned more suitably, especially as it does not have planning permission and was removed from an advert application! The Normandie sign fits in, the Town Crier's sticks out, Mykonos is overlarge? Better if signs fit the shape and rhythm of the doorways.

Allen's View

The Executive Committee authorised some tree work to reduce tree branches competing, remove weaker branches at risk and a few branches dying, and this work has been completed. It is hoped to get two tree stumps left for carving to be carved as The Green Man and the Green Women in February, again by tree surgeon Dan Badham, who carved the three owls and the larger peregrine and red kite already on the site.

The second water collector barrels installed in the summer by Richard Read filled very quickly this Year! In fact, the weather could have filled them twice over this winter!

Wet and windy weather has restricted work but there is less to do in winter; the Tenby Project lads have pulled ivy from trees, cleared some overgrowth beside the new apple saplings and done some planting (daffs, crocus and snowdrops by paths and benches).

There will be some pruning in the spring and the usual grass and hedge trimming through the summer.

Trains

Transport for Wales is planning to run an enhanced summer timetable during the school holidays as they did last year. The Sunday train service will also see additional trains.

The footbridge at Tenby Station will be dismantled week commencing 16 March. The bridge is being relocated to a heritage railway at Llanelli. A temporary footbridge will be erected during the same week. The token hut, used by the drivers to change the points, will be relocated and cabling work will also be undertaken. The work will include 24 hour working from 11pm on Sunday 15 March until 5.45am on Saturday 21 March. There will be no train services (Monday to Friday) and the station will be closed to the public during these works. A replacement bus service will operate from the bus stop near the multi storey car park.

Subscriptions

A note for our members: from January 2026 the annual subscription rate for non-emailable members is increased to £25; the emailable (£12.50) and life membership (£100) rates are unchanged. If you haven't yet renewed your membership, [NOW](#) is a good time!