

TROWBRIDGE TALKING NEWS

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the Annual General Meeting the Chairman extended a warm welcome to a social gathering for all Readers, Duplicators, Management Committee and Supporters.

A particularly warm welcome was given to Michael Wood, National Chairman of the Talking News Federation ("TNF") who had agreed to speak about the structure of the organisation and the services it can provide to Talking News organisations.

TNF started in Swindon 41 years ago and exists to provide an umbrella organisation able to help each of the individual 250 Talking News organisations which are spread throughout the UK. TNF was somewhere to go if a problem occurred which had not previously arisen or which seemed intractable.

In addition work was being carried out to evaluate different ways of providing information to service users and on the development of business systems. An example is an AI system for recording meetings which was being tested and could provide bullet points from discussions very soon after the meeting had ended.

In general terms the individual TN organisations often had a weakness around marketing and around 75% did no marketing at all. TNF could help with this which included help with establishment of a website although it had been noticed that TTN already had a very good website.

Audio would continue to be a vital way of providing a service as especially amongst those who lost their sight later in life Braille was not always well received. A recent development was the establishment of a "dial in" service which was very popular with those who had experimented with it.

There had been considerable work done to utilise Alexa for service users and although it was clear blind people were starting to use it this was conditional on users having Broadband. Grants for Alexa units were sometimes available.

It was clear IT was moving on rapidly and in some respects could cover gaps in recruitment of volunteers as in some areas TN organisations were struggling to find enough people to operate. In these cases operating a "studio in the cloud" could help and TNF could assist in linking in to this.

Podcasts were already being used to provide information to "print disabled people" and magazines as well as newspapers were starting to use this format.

In conclusion it was confirmed that TNF was always available to provide a professional support service to individual TN organisations.

The thanks of those attending were expressed to Michael Wood and the formal part of the meeting was then convened.

Minutes of the twelfth Annual General Meeting of Trowbridge Talking News held on **Wednesday 24 September 2025** at the Trowbridge Park Club, Park Road, Trowbridge, BA14 6JB at 7.45 pm

PRESENT: Richard Clarke (Chairman)

Amelie Clarke, Carol Clarke, Maxine Coles, Nicola Dew,
Margaret Firth, Brent Hodges, Steve Gailor, Geoff Holt, Zuli Jadavji,
Lynn Jadavji, Olivia Lambdin, Emily Pomroy-Smith, Ben Morris,
David Vincent, Chris Williams, Sue Williams

01. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chairman welcomed those attending the formal AGM and apologies for absence were received from Martin Brown, Caren Felton, Mike Holden, Fern McCollum, Ted Sweet

02. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 01 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

03. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

04. Motions Submitted

No Motion had been submitted from anyone for consideration at the AGM.

05. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on the year to 31 March 2025 and more generally provided an up to date picture of the service provided to listeners.

The Readers, Duplicators, the team at the TIC and the Management Committee provided a service for 50 weeks of the year, the exception being the Christmas period when post is unreliable and there is not much news to report. Grateful thanks were expressed to all volunteers for their commitment and efficiency, listeners often hear the recordings on Saturday mornings.

The numbers of service users had remained broadly static. In the last 12 months the most listeners was 26 and he noted that in July 2022 we had the same number of listeners as today.

Particular thanks were recorded to Lance Allen, the now retired Town Clerk/Chief Executive, for approving the use of the TIC when the Knee's facility was lost, for authorising the TIC to provide support in many other ways and for his work as a regular Reader.

The TIC team have again been invaluable, turning round the pouches every week, raising the profile of TTN by redesigning the posters and fliers and including TTN in the Town Council newsletters and their social media

“feeds” including the Spotted in Trowbridge Facebook pages. In return extracts from TIC newsletters will be included in TTN readings.

Mike Holden accepted an invitation on our behalf to give TTN publicity on West Wiltshire Radio and was interviewed for about 15 minutes about the service given by TTN and how the recordings are produced. With the help of the TIC team investigations are underway regarding providing WWR with regular updates.

Thanks were also due to Fern McCollum, Web Administrator, who is looking into an alternative for the KARDS software, no longer supported by the manufacturer, and who has kindly agreed to take over the database of clients and producing the laminated address labels for the pouches.

During the year the Treasurer and the Secretary went through the tortuous process of changing bank from Lloyds to NatWest to avoid imposition of monthly bank charges which would be out of all proportion to the number of transactions.

Thanks were expressed to the Secretary, Chris Williams, for continued support to TTN by processing new applications, inducting new service users, production of the weekly Rota and production of agendas and minutes.

A presentation was made to the Secretary in recognition of his service to TTN, he responded by saying how much he appreciated the kind words and the gifts.

Thanks were also expressed to three long serving members of the Management Committee, Ted Sweet, Brent Hodges and Zuli Jadavji all of whom were once again standing for re-election.

Clearly there was still a demand for a high quality, personal service. Our listeners appreciated the different voices they hear each week and the personal selection of items read.

In conclusion the Chairman said that although his 25 years involvement with TTN were now ending he was confident that all the required resources were in place, the service was on a sound footing and TTN could look to the future with confidence even though there are now other ways to access the news.

RESOLVED that the Chairman’s Report be approved and adopted.

06. Treasurer’s Report

A Statement of Accounts which had been subject to independent examination was presented for the 12 month period ending 31 March 2025.

It was noted that costs were constantly reviewed, examples being the change of bank and change of insurance broker (total assets at year end: £2275.29)

On being proposed and duly seconded

RESOLVED that

The Statement of Accounts for the year 2024/25 be approved and adopted.

07. Secretary's Report

The Secretary thanked all Readers, Duplicators and Supporters for their co-operation when formulating the Rota and the management and staff at the TIC for their ongoing support.

RESOLVED that the Secretary's report be approved and adopted.

08. Web Administrator's Report

The Web Administrator being absent due to unforeseen circumstances it was requested that a verbal report be presented to the first available meeting of the Management Committee.

09. Nominations and Elections to the Management Committee

- (i) Nominations were invited for the Officers of the Management Committee for the forthcoming year.

There was one nomination for each post which was proposed and duly seconded and the following were elected unopposed:-

Chairman: Emily Pomroy-Smith

Secretary: Chris Williams

Treasurer: Zuli Jadavji

Web Administrator: Fern McCollum

- (ii) Nominations were invited for three further seats on the Management Committee for the forthcoming year.

There were three nominations for the three seats which were proposed and duly seconded and the following were elected unopposed:-

- Ted Sweet
- Graham Hudd
- Brent Hodges

- (iii) It was reaffirmed that one seat on the Management Committee was reserved for Isabelle Compton or any other nominee of the TIC and could be filled on a rotating basis.

10. Vote of Thanks

A formal vote of thanks was proposed to Richard Clarke for his many years of service to TTN as Reader, Committee Member and two spells as Chairman

RESOLVED that the above be approved unanimously

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm

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