

Campaign for a Shipley Town Council

Interim Progress Report

Autumn 2018

This document provides a summary of the campaign launch, overall approach and progress to date and argues the case for an accelerated governance review.

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1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following signs of increasing demand for a Town Council, the Campaign for a Shipley Town Council (CSTC) was established in early 2018 with Rob Martin as Chair. Before a Town Council can be established, BMDC will need to conduct a Governance Review as a formal test of local demand. A Governance Review must be held if the Council receives a valid petition signed by 7.5% of the electors in the area.

Between January and April, we successfully completed a number of pre-launch activities:

- Worked with BMDC and local politicians to establish a workable parish boundary based on Shipley Ward (minus Coach Road polling district 22A, already part of Baildon parish)
- Established our campaign group
- Agreed a valid petition with BMDC officers including the boundary map and wording
- Engaged with local residents (including community groups, politicians and businesses) to understand community concerns and informal views about the need for a Town Council

We launched our campaign in May, on the day of the General Election. Activities have included:

- Engaging local groups and politicians
- Holding public meetings and giving talks to local organisations
- Establishing an online and social media presence
- Engaging with local radio and print media to gain coverage of the campaign
- Defining and distributing our petition leaflet
- Identifying and understanding local issues

Campaign funds have been very tight with no grants available and the cessation of set-up funding offered to other local Town Councils. We have been entirely reliant on donations from supporters (both financial and in kind), other than compensation received following difficulties setting up a bank account.

Over the next phase of the campaign, we will focus on identifying the most effective route to trigger the BMDC Governance Review and to ensure that this has a successful outcome. We propose to:

- Produce refreshed campaign materials
- Consult with BMDC on directly triggering a Governance Review (as recommended by the minister for Local Government)
- Continue to build public support and understanding, including a focus on engaging community groups
- Identify potential candidates to stand as Town Councillors

While we have been able to draw on assistance from a wide range of supporters, reliance on a small steering committee to shape and drive our activities remains a key risk to our campaign. To mitigate this, we want to recruit at least one person in each of the four polling districts to be part of the steering committee.

The campaign has got off to a strong start and has collected 35% of the signatures we will need; it is rare to meet someone in Shipley who has not heard of the campaign. Feedback, both online and face to face, has in the main been strongly positive and we remain convinced that there is real appetite for Shipley to have its own Town Council.

There is a strong argument for BMDC to carry out a Governance Review, potentially including a referendum, at the same time as the District Council election in May 2019. This would cost BMDC no more than holding the review when we present the petition and, by aligning any referendum with an existing election, may save money. From the perspective of Shipley residents, this would allow a Town Council to be created in a more timely and efficient manner. In this event, CSTC would be able to allocate more resources to educating and informing electors about the powers and benefits of a Shipley Town Council.

2) BEGINNINGS

Following discussions over many years about the need for Shipley to be formally represented as a community, we had noticed signs of an increased appetite in the year prior to our campaign launch. The Bradford area has an impressive number of Town/Parish Councils (supported by the aims of the Localism Act). The way these 19 groups were preserving and enhancing community assets, despite serious cuts BMDC was being forced to make, confirmed our belief that the time was right for further exploration of the possibility of a Shipley Town Council.

Rob Martin arranged a stall at the 2017 Christmas Lights event in Saltaire as an initial test of support from local residents. There was an enthusiastic response, with people asking questions and giving their contact details. We were left in no doubt that a Town Council for Shipley had a lot of support.

The first campaign planning session was held in January 2018 with a meeting at Shipley Town Hall. Participants shared personal views of why a Shipley Town Council is needed, along with direct experience of Local Councils and ideas to shape the campaign process. Chris Pilkington of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association attended and gave advice. A Governance Review can be held at the Council's discretion and must be held if the Council receives a valid petition signed by 7.5% of the electors in the area.

Following a series of initial discussions, the campaign group held a public meeting in Shipley Library to engage potential volunteers and campaign group members. This was followed by a formal meeting to agree the campaign name, constitution and to appoint individuals to Steering Group positions (see Appendix A) with responsibility for leading and shaping the campaign.

The campaign strategy was agreed through a series of open meetings including the campaign officers and supporters. These established the following goals for the campaign:

- Agree the boundaries for the proposed Town Council
- Initiate a formal process to trigger BMDC to perform a Governance Review
- Engage constructively with local groups and politicians
- Engage and inform the Shipley electorate
- Work to ensure that a Town Council can be established effectively following approval by BMDC

The campaign group agreed that we would seek to record significant local issues and inform the electorate as to how a Town Council could influence these. We agreed that while individual members and supporters of the Campaign hold strong views on these issues, we would not take a formal position on these as a group.

3) APPROACH

A) BOUNDARY DEFINITION

Shipley has a clear identity and many people talk with pride about the Shipley Urban District Council prior to the 1974 local government reorganisation. This "sense of place" is still strongly felt. The town centre shops, library, town hall, open market and covered market with the clock tower are established landmarks. Shipley has a diverse population and geography: housing, parks and open spaces mixed in with industrial development from the early 1800s. Saltaire World Heritage Site is within the Shipley boundary. Shipley's historic buildings and open spaces are under constant threat from road building and in-fill housing.

Consultation with BMDC indicated that the "parish" to be covered by the Town Council would need to follow existing council ward boundaries, to be within a single parliamentary constituency and could not overlap with existing areas covered by other Town Councils.

The possibility of including Windhill in the Town Council area was discussed and thought to be a sensible proposition in principle. We explored the issue with several Windhill residents and local councillors, but no one was prepared to join our campaign. We were told that signatures for a Windhill Community Council had been collected by Windhill Community Centre, but have been unable to confirm the current status of this petition or what plans may exist to progress it. It is clear that BMDC Councillors for Windhill do not wish their area to be included in a new Shipley Town Council "parish". They will support the CSTC if it does not include Windhill.

At our second public meeting a participant proposed the inclusion of the "Redburn" area, which in the past was part of Shipley Ward. This area is now in a different Parliamentary constituency and our advice from BMDC and YLCA is that going over that boundary would require a formal boundary review. Even if such a review was supported (which would need strong and clear evidence), the cost and time involved would be prohibitive for our campaign.

Based on the above and following consultation with both BMDC and YLCA, we have finalised the area to be “parished” as the Shipley Ward boundary (minus Coach Road polling district 22A). This includes the following polling districts:

Ward	Electors	Area
22B	2,894	Hirst Wood/Saltaire/Wycliffe
22C	1,176	South of Wycliffe, Crowgill Park, Commercial Street, Westgate, Dockfield Road
22D	3,741	Moorhead/ Nab Wood east to Farfield Road
22E	2,542	Norman Rae playing fields, Norwood, down to Kirkgate, Station Road
	10,353	

The petition needs 7.5% of these electors which is **777** signatures.

B) GOVERNANCE REVIEW PROCESS

Before establishing a new Local Council, BMDC must undertake a community governance review (CGR). This provides an opportunity for Bradford Council to review and make any appropriate changes to local governance within an area. The aim of the review is to ensure that local governance continues to be effective and convenient and that it reflects the people and interests of local communities.

In undertaking the review, the Council must have due regard to the relevant parts of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972 and Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission.

“The Act places a duty on principal authorities to have regard to the need to secure that any community governance for the area under review reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area, and that it is effective and convenient; relevant considerations which influence judgements against these two principal criteria include the impact on community cohesion, and the size, population and boundaries of the proposed area.” Guidance on Community Governance Reviews – Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

The key phases of the governance review are as follows:

Stage	Activity
CGR Triggered	BMDC can trigger a CGR either following receipt of a valid petition, or following a decision by the council itself.
Terms of Reference Prepared	These are taken to Governance and Audit Committee for consideration and approval (the terms of reference would include details of consultation activity with local people and any other person or body which appears to have an interest in the review).
Perform Review	The CGR process is run by Bradford Council officers
Recommendation	The outcome of the CGR/consultation is collated, and taken to Governance and Audit Committee for consideration. The committee then make a recommendation to full Council on the outcome of the CGR
Decision	Full Council make a decision and the Secretary of State and other parties are informed.

In order for a petition to be valid for the proposed Shipley Town Council, this would need to be supported by a minimum of 7.5% of the local electorate. BMDC advice so far has been that while electronic signatures are accepted for other petition processes, they would not regard an electronic petition as valid to trigger a CGR. BMDC have the ability to trigger a CGR independently of the requirement for a petition to be submitted.

C) ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL GROUPS AND POLITICIANS

Following advice from local councils including Baildon, Bingley and Wilsden, we have contacted a wide range of Shipley groups and businesses to outline our proposals and seek support. Some organisations have not been able to express formal support, but other groups and businesses have helped in various ways. We have found many individuals strongly in favour. We greatly appreciate all expressions of support. These include:

Who	What
Bradford Civic Society	Expression of support
Design2B	Leaflet and poster design, website development
Friends of Northcliffe	Opportunity to present at meeting
Higher Ground Café	Hosting petition return box
Hirst Wood Regeneration Group	Leaflet distribution and online circulation of campaign information
Kirkgate Centre	Hosting petition form
Shipley Traders & Shipley Shopping (Meryl Holland)	Engagement with local businesses
Shipley Town Centre Management (Stuart Illingworth)	Expression of support
Rad Studio	Hosting petition return box
Saltaire Festival	Expression of support at AGM
Saltaire Village Society	Opportunity to present at AGM and expression of support
Shipley Shopping	Circulation of campaign information
Tambourine Café	Hosting petition return box
The Triangle	Hosting petition return box
Shipley Rotary	Opportunity to present at meeting (date tbc)

We have also engaged with politicians across the political spectrum. As a campaign, we are politically neutral and are aiming to achieve as wide a support base as possible. This has resulted in expressions of support from:

- Shipley and Keighley Liberal Democrats
- Shipley Ward Labour Party
- Shipley BMDC Councillors (two Green and one Labour)
- Councillors from neighbouring Windhill:
 - Vanda Greenwood
 - Alex Ross-Shaw (also Chair of Saltaire Steering Group)
- Philip Davies MP (Conservative)
- Lord Wallace of Saltaire (Liberal Democrat)

Town Councillors from Baildon, Bingley and Wilsden have also given their support to our campaign, including giving talks at our public meetings.

D) PUBLIC MEETINGS

Although we are convinced that a Shipley Town Council would be a good thing, we want to ensure that local people understand the implications of a Town Council, including the powers it would have, how these would make a difference to the community and how the Council would be funded and elected.

To support this aim, we have held public meetings in each of the polling districts to inform electors and invite them to sign our petition. Also we have had stalls at local events, displaying maps of the area, FAQs and other information about Town Councils.

Date	Venue	Summary and Speakers
20 th November 2017	The Hop	Presentation to Saltaire Festival AGM
9 th April 2018	Shipley Bowling Club	Presentation to Friends of Northcliffe by Rob Martin and Chris Grogan
12 th April 2018	Caroline St Social Club	Presentation to Saltaire Village Society AGM
28 th April 2018	Shipley Library	Drop in Q&A to raise awareness and recruit volunteers
12 th May 2018	Shipley Market Place	Information stall at Saturday outdoor market
28 th May 2018	Shipley Glen	Information stall at Suffragette Rally Centenary event
30 th May 2018	Shipley Market Place	Information stall at Shipley Street Arts Festival

Date	Venue	Summary and Speakers
2 nd June	Saltaire Methodist Church	Public meeting with speakers: Si Cunningham, chair of Bradford Civic Society Joe Ashton, Baildon Town Councillor Ulrike Knox, chair of Saltaire Village Society
1 st July	St Peter's Church	Public meeting with speakers: Peter Allison, Chair of Wilsden Parish Council Chris Pilkington, YLCA Molly Kenyon, Shipley resident
7 th July	Northcliffe Church	Public meeting with speakers: Ros Dawson, chair of Bingley Town Council Dave Robison, chair of Norwood Neighbourhood
23 rd July	Kirkgate Centre	Solstice Celebration with performances provided free by local musicians Plumhall and Gerry Cooper. This included two songs written for the campaign: "This is Our Town" by Nick Hall "Shape Up Shipley" by Eddie Lawler
Pending	Shipley Rotary	Invitation to speak at meeting

Our campaign was strengthened by the formal process of planning and holding these meetings. All the meetings went well, with participants paying close attention and asking worthwhile questions. Feedback was generally very positive with attendees highlighting potential benefits such as local management of community assets (toilets etc.) and input into planning decisions. Critical comments were mainly about the possibility of party politics taking over a Town Council, the amount of the precept and the new parish boundary. There was useful discussion on all of these points.

E) EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to setting up an email distribution list to keep our supporters informed (shiptowntowncouncil@gmail.com) we have developed a website offering detailed information and have established the campaign on social media via Twitter and Facebook. Currently we have 71 subscribers to our mailing list, 413 Facebook followers and 170 Twitter followers. Our analysis suggests that there is limited overlap between each of these groups.

Engagement has been good across all channels, with similar feedback to that received at our public meetings and events. In particular, this has focused on local issues concerning parking, planning and public toilets, alongside discussion of elections, the precept and the proposed boundary.

F) PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA

We engaged with local print media outlets in order to share our campaign messages. This resulted in 3 favourable articles in the Telegraph and Argus (27th April, 7th May, 5th June) along with a further 2 positive articles in the Saltaire Review (Issue 27 Feb/March and Issue 28 June/July).

We were also offered a slot on a local community radio station, BCB 106.6 where we gave an interview outlining our campaign strategy and objectives.

G) PETITION LEAFLET

It was essential to ensure that our petition was formally valid and provided enough information for potential signatories. We designed a leaflet with information about what a Town Council could do on one side and a petition (in consultation with BMDC officers) on the other displaying a map of the area requested and agreed wording to trigger a formal boundary review.

To maximise visibility, we delivered the petition leaflet to houses across the polling districts, left copies in public buildings such as the Kirkgate Centre and in shops, cafes and pubs. The leaflet was available at our public meetings and at local events, e.g. Shipley and Saltaire markets. Clipboards with the petition details were also used to collect signatures.

We worked with local businesses to establish a series of collection points in four venues across different parts of Shipley Ward. People were asked to sign and return the leaflet to these locations. When additional house-to-house leafletting was done near those venues, the number of signed copies dropped into our boxes increased noticeably. By early September all the petition leaflets had been distributed and an updated version was being prepared.

We now have 284 signatures – 35% of what we need. Many people have asked us about being able to sign electronically, but BMDC advised us that only physically signed paper petition submissions would be acceptable.

H) LOCAL ISSUES

A number of relevant local issues have been highlighted by local electors and campaign supporters through our campaign. We are tracking these while attempting to maintain a reasonably neutral position as an unelected campaign group. We do have personal views, and future Town Councillors would not be constrained in this way.

Issues highlighted to date which a Town Council could influence and have a statutory right of consultation on include:

- Closure of the public toilets in Shipley and Saltaire
- Closure of the Visitor Information Centre in Saltaire
- BMDC decision to demolish the Branch pub; one of the oldest buildings in Shipley
- Car Park provision at Oastler Road
- Proposal to use land at Northcliffe (gifted to the people of Shipley) for a crematorium
- House building on land (above Scarborough and Marlborough Roads) which had been refused on a previous application
- Demolition of Oddfellows Hall
- Pavement weed killing reduction
- Anti-social behaviour & Police liaison
- Renewed prospect of a "Shipley By-Pass"

4) FINANCES

Our main source of income has been through generous support from individual campaign supporters – including both financial contributions and provision of time and expertise. In addition, we received compensation from HSBC following difficulties with opening our bank account. We reviewed grant funding as part of the campaign set-up, including an application for a Shipley Area Committee Community Chest award, but were unsuccessful in securing an award. While the recently-formed Town Council in Bingley received a set-up grant of £17,500 over three years, equivalent funding is no longer available.

Expenditure has largely been on room hire and insurance for our public meetings, along with printing costs for leaflets and posters. We have been able to save costs on leaflet design, website development and hosting thanks to donations in kind from supporters.

Our income and expenditure to date are set out below. As of 23rd August, we have £278 remaining and are in the process of reviewing both the most effective way to use this balance and options to raise further funds.

Income	
Opening Balance	£0
Donations	£545
Compensation from HSBC	£100
Summer Solstice Event	£147
Total Income	£792
Expenditure	
Public Liability Insurance	-£99
Room Rental	-£234
Leaflet Printing Costs	-£99
Stationery and Ink Costs	-£64
Summer Solstice Event Costs	-£18
Total Expenditure	-£514
Balance	£278

5) FUTURE STRATEGY

A) CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

As our petition leaflet has now been available for several months, we plan to reinvigorate our campaign by producing a refreshed leaflet design. This will allow us to reflect feedback on our initial design, to refine our collection approach through targeted leafletting and to establish new drop-off locations.

B) GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Our Chair, Rob Martin, wrote to the Minister for Communities James Brokenshire (via Philip Davies MP) asking why set-up grants as received by Bingley Town Council have been stopped. His reply includes a recommendation that we ask BMDC to carry out a Governance Review without the petition as a pre-condition. We have asked the BMDC Chief Executive for a meeting to explore this option.

There is a strong argument for BMDC to carry out a Governance Review, potentially including a referendum, at the same time as the District Council election in May 2019. This would cost BMDC no more than holding the review when we present the petition and, by aligning any referendum with an existing election, may save money. From the perspective of Shipley residents, this would allow a Town Council to be created in a more timely and efficient manner. In this event, CSTC would be able to allocate more resources to educating and informing electors about the powers and benefits of a Shipley Town Council.

In addition, we will also ask BMDC about any options for electronic submissions. As electronic submissions are accepted for other requests and there appears to be no legislative barrier, we believe that this would both benefit our ability to engage the electorate and align with the governments stated aim to reduce the bureaucracy associated with the process.

C) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement and visibility has been strong throughout our initial campaign period. It is now rare for us to come across people who have not heard of the campaign. Our challenge going forward is to widen public understanding of the need for a Town Council and how it would operate. We will be encouraging people to consider standing as councillors.

We will maintain contact with individuals, community groups and commercial organisations, asking for their active support. Some organisations may not be able to offer explicit support for constitutional reasons. We are happy to work with any group interested in our campaign to explore opportunities to give talks and to circulate information. The Shipley branch of Rotary International has very kindly invited us to speak at a future meeting, and we look forward to similar invitations.

Other planned and potential activities:

- Target certain places: Dockfield, Riverside Court, Wycliffe flats, Shipley Central flats which have not been leafleted
 - Stalls at Shipley market, Saltaire market, Saltaire Festival and Shipley Alternative markets (at Kirkgate Centre)
 - Door-knocking with the petition
 - Ask people to write letters in support of a Shipley Town Council
 - Write a street theatre script to be performed in suitable places, i.e. Victoria Mills
 - Take the petition to evening commuters arriving on trains at Shipley and Saltaire
 - Meetings for groups e.g. Shipley Traders/Shipley Town centre management (perhaps on a Sunday at Kirkgate Centre)
 - Press releases to the T&A and Saltaire Review, further interviews on BCB etc.
 - Take part in events such as Rhubarb poetry evenings at the Triangle
-

D) PREPARATION FOR A TOWN COUNCIL

In preparation for a Town Council being approved, and to ensure that sufficient candidates can be found, we have been providing information about the role and responsibilities of Town Councillors. We are also considering holding a workshop or training course to allow candidates to fully understand what is involved.

We have already identified at least four individuals who may be interested and would like to identify more prospective Town Councillors who would be able to help with campaign planning and activities. This would both help to bolster our active support and help to ensure that a Town Council can be established effectively following approval.

6) RISKS

We have identified the following key risks which may affect progress on our campaign. As a group, we are working to address these and minimise their impact

- **Finances:** As we have not been able to access grant funding, our campaign continues to be run on a very tight budget. We are prioritising spending based on available money and will look at avenues to raise more money.
- **Signatures:** It is challenging to turn general support into physical signatures. Options to improve the rate of return include work with community groups, canvassing, electronic submissions and accelerating the governance review process.
- **Volunteers:** We have had support from a wide range of individuals and groups, but our steering group remains small. Identifying additional individuals to provide time, expertise and planning support will be key to maintaining momentum

7) CONCLUSIONS

We have got off to a very promising start; we have collected a significant proportion of the signatures we need and it is rare to meet someone who has not heard of the Town Council Campaign.

We are conscious that the steering committee needs strengthening. In particular, we would like to identify at least one person in each of the polling districts to be part of the campaign steering committee.

As a campaign, we have a pool of people willing to help with various tasks. We are now focused on matching specific people to essential tasks, and working out a schedule for Phase 2 of the campaign. This will involve refreshed campaign literature, new petition locations and ongoing community engagement.

Following advice from the Minister for Communities, we believe that there would be benefits both to BMDC and to the campaign in triggering a Governance Review ahead of the petition being complete. This would potentially save BMDC money and allow us to focus on educating the electorate of Shipley about the powers and benefits of a Town Council.

A) KEY INDIVIDUALS

The following individuals have been key to providing advice in setting up the group and running our campaign activities to date:

Name	Role
Rob Martin	Chair
James Roberts	Treasurer and Social Media
Molly Kenyon	Steering Group
Les Brook	Secretary (interim)
Darren Spink	Design of leaflets and posters Website support
David Robison	Website creation and hosting
Steve Khabra	MailChimp set-up
Jackie Mulligan	Facebook account set-up and advice

We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved so far, including by speaking at our public meetings, distributing leaflets and promoting our messages on social media.



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23 JUL 2018

Dear Philip,

Thank you for your letter of 25 June to the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, on behalf of your constituent, Mr Rob Martin of 61 Albert Road, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD18 4NS, about promoting a statutory form of local democracy. I am replying as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

I am pleased to hear of Mr Martin's efforts to create a Town Council in Shipley. Town and parish councils have an important role in improving the quality of life and well-being of their communities as well as representing the views of their communities to principal councils and others. The Government encourages all communities wishing to establish a parish council to petition their local authority to that effect.

Mr Martin mentions the support provided to Bingley Town Council under the New Councils Programme. This Department provided £1 million of funding over 3 years up to 2015/16 under this programme. It was administered by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and provided support to local campaigners for a range of activities including costs associated with producing campaign literature, holding community meetings and the purchase of training. On evaluating the fund after 3 years, we concluded that, whilst it had enabled a number of communities to explore the opportunities a parish council could bring, it had not resulted in more parish councils being created and so the programme was discontinued.

However, we do recognise that strong communities can help build support for a new council by showing what a community is capable of. The MyCommunity website contains resources and helpful case studies for communities including sections on taking over a local service and creating a neighbourhood plan. This information is available here: <https://mycommunity.org.uk/take-action>.

Mr Martin may also wish to work with the district council and request that they undertake a community governance review to understand the strength of feeling locally.

Thank you for writing in on this important matter.

RISHI SUNAK MP