

TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

FOR HONITON

Annual Report 2008-09 by Cllr. Vivienne Ash

As I reflect on this past year for Honiton Town Council I realise what a momentous twelve months it has been. So unusually I would like to start my report with thanks – to all my fellow Councillors, to the Town Council staff and to the people of Honiton and to Roy for all their efforts on so many issues.

The year started with the election of Cllr Chris Tratt as Mayor of Honiton and everyone was pleased to see this honour bestowed on a man who was born and bred here and who cared deeply for the town and its residents. I can only express our complete shock and dismay when his untimely death was announced in November of last year. At that time we lost a good man, a good Councillor and a good Mayor. We have been delighted that Mrs Jean Tratt agreed to continue to be Mayoress for the year and would like to thank her for undertaking so many public engagements on behalf of the Council.



Cllr Whitlock has led our Policy Committee this year where a variety of matters which have come before the Council for discussion. I would like to pay particular thanks to Cllr Whitlock for all his work on budget setting to ensure that the Town Council continues to give value for money for all its residents.

The work of a Town Council is varied and this past year has certainly proved to be no exception. Cllr Teare, as Chair of Planning has overseen the notable planning applications we have dealt with, the most significant of which was undoubtedly the Tesco Inquiry. All Councillors serve on the Planning Committee, which meets twice a month, and act in an advisory capacity to East Devon District Council on all planning applications which affect the town, whether they are for a large scale development or for replacement windows in a listed building. I would like to thank them for the professional way in which they undertake this duty.

We have continued this year to strive to resolve the problems around the A35 at the Kings Road/ Monkton Road junction and Cllr Morgan has worked tirelessly on this project, liaising with residents, other local authorities and the Highways Agency. We are at last discussing with the Highways Agency ways to make this part of the town safer and to reduce the social isolation for a large number of residents and are hopeful that a suitable solution will soon be found. At the same time we have been working with Devon County Council and East Devon District Council on our prime aim to reinstate plans for an eastern bypass.

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF

Mrs L.Hargood	Town Clerk	42957
Mrs C. Bowles	Assistant to Clerk	42957
Mrs C. Batty	Assistant to Clerk	42957
Mr. T. Farebrother	Street Market Supervisor	43280
Mr. T. Lenton	Street Market Manager	

This year has also seen major developments with regard to our open spaces. The Glen Regeneration project, funded by the National Lottery, has resulted in a greatly improved resource for the people of Honiton and I would like to thank Cllr Boom and our colleagues in East Devon District Council, together with the Friends of the Glen and groups of young people, for undertaking this transformation in the centre of the town. New leaflets and signposts now make this green space much more accessible.

Work at Roundball Wood has also been significant and has been led by our three voluntary wardens – Richard Howe, Liz Tirard and Dave Witt. Under their leadership a Friends group has been started and the wood has been improved with new fencing and pathways. At the end of this year we were informed that we had been successful in our application for funding from the AONB Sustainable Fund and this is being used to increase understanding and access to the wood through interpretation boards and leaflets. We are hopeful that more funding will be forthcoming next year to allow us to concentrate on using the wood as an educational resource for all, but especially for young people.

Honiton also has a good network of footpaths and lanes, opening up wonderful walking opportunities for people. We are very fortunate in having the expertise of Cllrs Coombs and Fleming to lead on the development and maintenance of our footpaths which we manage in partnership with Devon County Council.

Honiton is also very fortunate in its range of beautiful trees and I am grateful to Cllrs Farnham and Fleming for taking on the role of Tree Wardens, giving the Council advice on planning applications which affect trees in the town.

For some time now the Town Council has been looking for ways to meet its obligations to provide allotments for the many people in the town who have asked for this facility. In the summer the Council resolved, having looked at all other options, to go ahead with developing part of the field at Honiton Bottom Road into allotments with full facilities. An allotment association has been established and Cllr McGuire will be working closely with this group as we move forward to planning and development.

Following our success in becoming a Quality Council in 2007 we have been negotiating with the District Council during the year to transfer a number of assets to Town Council control. The most significant of these has been the street market and we are delighted that this important Honiton facility is now managed by the Council, led by Cllr Casson. Terry Farebrother has stayed on as Market Supervisor and Tom Lenton has now joined him as Market Manager and we are pleased to welcome them to work for the Town Council.

The Community Complex is a priority need for Honiton and will give the town a cultural and civic centre to be used by local groups as well as by visiting artistes. We are currently working closely with East Devon District Council, particularly with Cllr Halse as Portfolio Holder for Economy, to ensure that this project at last moves forward to completion to tie in with the expansion of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery.

The state of our town and its cleanliness is something that the Council takes extremely seriously and we have taken action on behalf of many residents during the year to ensure that matters are dealt with swiftly by the relevant local authority. I am grateful to Cllr Taylor for his chairmanship of the Street Cleanliness Group.

During the year the Council resolved to make working with the young people of Honiton a priority and this has been headed up by Cllr Holloway. We have started on this with the introduction of termly awards to students from Honiton Community College; with the involvement of young people in the refurbishment of the Glen; with the co-development of the FAME activity day in the Mackarness Hall in the autumn. We are now working closely with the two primary schools and the community college to develop the first stage of a Youth Council as a facility for young people to talk directly with Councillors and this is being taken forward by Cllr Foster. During this coming year we will be introducing a new annual sports award for young people and are currently finalising the details.

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL
Statement of Income and Expenditure
for year ending 31 March 2009

	2007/8	2008/9	
	£p	£p	£p
INCOME			
Precept	97590.00	100000.00	
Agency fees EDDC/DCC	2442.00	2625.20	
Street Market Income	0.00	6686.25	
Bank Interest	5796.88	3412.23	
Donations & Refunds	179.13	5602.19	
Grants	9100.00	6965.61	
Insurance Claims	811.45	2000.00	
TOTAL INCOME	115919.46		127291.48
EXPENDITURE			
Council Expenses	10143.04	5998.39	
Subscriptions	1313.00	1171.00	
Environment and Tourism	14751.49	18589.96	
Grants	4850.00	6050.00	
Ongoing Grants	13206.39	3904.56	
Administration	10653.25	11870.81	
Premises	6875.54	5997.50	
Staffing Costs	39884.47	37001.58	
Non Precepted Expenditure from Income Received		16404.55	
Expenditure from Reserves	2039.00	34782.66	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	103716.18		141771.01
Net Income/Expenditure	12203.28		-14479.53

A full set of accounts is available for inspection from the Town Council Office or on its website:
www.honiton.gov.uk

We have also been pleased this year to develop further our relationship with a number of local organisations. We hold regular meetings with surrounding parish councils and have also been involved in talks with the Chamber of Commerce, the Senior Council, the Development Trust and the Blackdown Hills AONB. In addition Councillors work on a number of local organisations as representatives of the Council. It is only by working together that we can ensure we can do our very best for the people of Honiton.

Our links have not been confined to local organisations and we have continued to support our Twinning Association, through the leadership of Cllr Howard. During the summer we were pleased to join the members of the Association in their visit to Gronau in Germany.

The Council has also been pleased during this year to make a number of grants to local organisations to help them with their work for the Honiton community. Grants are made on an annual basis and full details are available on our website.

Working closely with the police, the Town Council has continued to improve the CCTV system within the town and this will continue to be an ongoing project to ensure the police have all the support we can give them to keep the town safe.

I would particularly like to thank ex-Councillors Liz Tirard, Richard Gaughan. Sharon Holloway and Jill McNally who all left the Council during the year but who have worked so tirelessly for the town during the time they were Councillors. I look forward to working with our new Members, Cllrs Allen, Ayres, Corke and Foster, as we move into next year.

The role of Chairman of the Council does, of course, bring with it the position of Mayor and it is always a pleasure for the Mayor to undertake the regular civic functions as well as the ad hoc requests from local businesses and organisations. Cllr Tratt was excellent at being involved in the community. In July he led Hot Pennies which gave us one of the few sunny days of the summer and the crowds of children thronged the streets to catch the pennies thrown from the local pubs, led as always by our inimitable Town Crier Dave Retter. This was swiftly followed by Charter Day and it was good to see that this new event has so quickly been adopted by people .

As we move forward into another year the Council is discussing ways in which it can continue to reflect the priorities of the people of Honiton and we will be looking at ways of being more actively engaged in the community. We recognise the importance of going out to meet more people in their own environment whether this be for businesses, residents or surrounding parishes. We hope that you find us always willing to listen to you and to hear your concerns and would encourage you to keep communicating with us so that we are able to represent you fully wherever we can.

Finally I would like to say a personal thanks to our Town Clerk, Lyn. She, together with her assistants Carolyn and Cherie, has been brilliant at ensuring the Council operates efficiently, particularly without the Mayor since November, and has been a great support to me.

Cllr Vivienne Ash, Acting Chairman & Deputy Mayor

COUNCILLORS - St. Michael's Ward			COUNCILLORS - St. Paul's Ward		
M.R. ALLEN	50 Marker Way EX14 2EN	46755	Miss V. ASH	3 Hillside, Combe Raleigh, Honiton EX14 4TJ	42028
J.J. AYRES	8 Queen Street EX14 1HB	07709 982580	R.E. COOMBS	9 Hill Crescent, EX14 2HY	47347
A.B. BOOM	1 Lilley Walk EX14 2EA	548745	J.P. CORKE	19 The Orchard, Otter Valley Park EX14 4PT	47437
Mrs S.A. CASSON	2 Bramble Lane, Exeter Road EX14 1AS	45367	R.A. FARNHAM	Golesworthy Cottage, 16 Dowell Stree EX14 1LT	44723
P.J. FLEMING	3 Glanvill Way EX14 2GD	43388	D FOSTER	17 Roundball Close EX14 2NU	07868 335612
M. McGUIRE	208 High Street, EX14 1AJ	46266	P. HALSE	Eddystone, Langford Road EX14 1QA	43854
J.B. TAYLOR	The Annexe, Beechwood, Feniton EX14 3ED		Mrs V.A. HOWARD	Hale Farm Cottage Axminster Road EX14 9TQ	47127
M.J. TEARE	18 Cypress Close, EX14 2YW	46463	Mrs M.D. MORGAN	8 Kings Road, EX14 1HW	46933
V.C. WHITLOCK	30 Rosemount Lane, EX14 1RJ	43959			

Cllr Vivienne Ash has been elected Town Mayor for 2009/10 with Cllr Peter Fleming elected as her Deputy. Mayor Making will take place on 1st June.