

TALK OF THE TOWN

THE NEWSLETTER OF HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 2011

TO ALL ELECTORS OF HONITON
You are invited to take part in the
TOWN MEETING
to be held at the Town Council offices
New Street, Honiton
on
Monday 21 March 2011 at 7.00 pm
FROM 6.00pm YOU ARE WELCOME TO COME IN AND TALK TO
THE CLERK AND COUNCILLORS ABOUT THE
5TH MAY ELECTION.
TEA AND COFFEE WILL BE AVAILABLE

Chairman – Councillor P E Fleming – Town Mayor

The Town Meeting may by law discuss all Town affairs and pass resolutions about them.

AGENDA

Chairman's welcome
Introduction of Councillors
Town Mayor's report
Minutes of the previous Town Meeting
Policy Committee report – Cllr V C Whitlock
Town Management Committee report – Cllr D Foster
Planning Committee report – Cllr M J Teare
Open Forum

Signed Cllr P E Fleming Town Mayor

7 March 2011

Town Management Advisory Committee (TMAC) Annual Report by Cllr David Foster

TMAC meets four times a year and is made up of representatives from Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Highways Agency, Police and Town Councillors covering issues from footpaths to road surfaces, the progress of the town C.C.T.V system, traffic and transport and policing matters.

This year at Town Management we have made good progress on some long standing issues and hope to keep making progress in the coming year. The meetings themselves are closed to the public but minutes can be obtained from the Town Council offices and members of the public are welcome to put forward issues they would like discussed on matters they feel need attention.

The Committee has particularly been involved this year in a number of traffic-related issues including input to the Local Development Framework, the Transport Plan and the next steps following the decision to make the centre of Honiton an Air Quality Management Area.

ELECTION TO BE HELD ON 5th MAY 2011

Local elections are to be held on Thursday 5th May for both Honiton Town Council and East Devon District Council. It is therefore important that everyone ensures that their name is on the current electoral roll so that they have the right to vote at these elections. The electoral roll update will close on 14th April – please contact East Devon District Council (01395 517402) if you need to add your details to the register of voters. It's your right to vote, so don't miss out.

Remember that not using your right to vote is like inviting someone else to tell you how your life and community should be run.

The Town Council is elected for four years and over the past four years the current Council has made much progress to ensure the ongoing viability and success of the town.

The Town Council depends on local people taking an interest in what happens in their community, whatever their background, and local people standing as councillors can bring a wealth of knowledge and community understanding into the local team.

If you feel you would like to make a real difference to your local area and would like details of how to become a town or district councillor please contact Lyn Hargood, the Town Clerk, on 01404 42957 or towncouncil@honiton.gov.uk.

DON'T FORGET CENSUS DAY IS 27TH MARCH 2011

STUDENT ADVISORS WORK WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council has been anxious for some time to ensure that the voice of young people in the town is taken into account during debates and when decisions are made. For a six month trial period the Council will be working with Student Ambassadors appointed by Honiton Community College.



The first Student Advisors to attend a Town Council meeting on 14.2.11

Students will sit at Council and committee meetings in the same capacity as the Clerk or any other professional advisor and will be expected to represent the views of all young people in the town. They will receive all council papers and be expected to discuss issues with other young people but their role will remain advisory only and they will not be responsible for decision making.

It is hoped that by introducing this innovative programme, the Town Council will be aware of the views of Honiton's young people, who normally do not have a voice as they are too young to vote for councillors to represent their views.

ANNUAL REPORT 2011 – PLANNING COMMITTEE

Honiton Town Council's Planning Committee usually meets twice a month, the dates of meetings synchronised as far as possible with East Devon District Council's own schedule of meetings and cycle of deadlines for commenting on planning applications.

Our role is advisory, the final decision resting with the District Council although we do submit reports on applications for consent to display advertisements, primarily business signage. Our ideal is for such signage to be in keeping with the general appearance of the town and to this end guidance is available from the Town Council office. Councillors are assisted in their deliberations on such applications by a report from the Deputy Town Clerk whilst for applications for work on trees we have a report from one of our two Tree Wardens to consider.

Looking back over agendas for the last council year, I see the most common applications to come before us were for extensions to residential properties as the owner sought a more affordable alternative to moving in order to gain more space, an ongoing trend. This is also reflected in the numerous applications for conservatories over the year to the extent where there can be few properties left in town without one.

You may have seen that work has begun on the construction of a branch of the Lidl chain of supermarkets, on the site of the former BP garage on the Heathpark estate. A successful application has also been made for an Aldi store to be built on the site of Slades Countrywise at Turk's Head. Whilst supportive of these applications the committee has sought to ensure the District Council remains focused on issues of traffic congestion at this well used road junction and other key points for vehicle distribution around the town.

Cllr. Farnham, who has been my able deputy on Planning, would not forgive me if I did not specifically mention Dowell St. If such traffic issues are not resolved they will threaten the economic viability of the town and the Council is keenly seeking to explore potential solutions with the District and County Councils. The health implications meanwhile have been highlighted by the work that is being done on air quality in the town which has shown unacceptable levels of nitrogen dioxide. Residents' views are currently being sought.

Returning to Heathpark, we try and continue to maintain an appropriate balance between retail and industry on the site in our comments on planning applications and are calling for a policy that will ensure the correct mix of use of the estate providing a variety of employment opportunities.

This is part of our wider submission as a Council to the Local Development Framework the District Council is currently developing. There has been negligible planning gain from large scale housing developments in the town in previous years and we are left with a variety of challenges in providing the facilities the town needs for its continued prosperity with reduced opportunities for development within the town. This needs to be coupled with the correct policies in key areas like employment, transport and housing.

This last year has seen the Council itself put in an application for allotments on land at Honiton Bottom Road and prepare an application for a community centre on land at Lace Walk. We are taking all the steps we can to progress the former while the County Council considers an application for village green status for the proposed piece of land and with regard to the latter the District Council is reviewing its options and we continue to work with them on delivering this project.

I would conclude by suggesting that anyone considering carrying out works on a residential or business premise would be well served by discussing the matter with the District Council first. Advice received and taken into account usually assists the progress of an application and the Town Council will work closely with East Devon to address any work carried out without permission.

Finally may I thank my fellow Councillors for the work they put into debating the applications that come before us and the Deputy Town Clerk who has the unenviable task of turning those deliberations into coherent minutes and recommendations.

Cllr. Michael Teare, Chair of Planning.



ANNUAL POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT by Cllr. Vernon Whitlock

All Town Councillors are members of the Policy Committee which meets quarterly to consider financial and policy matters relating to Council business. It reviews progress in Council projects and makes recommendations to the full Council.

The past year has seen the Council review its policies on training, financial arrangements, media relations and code of conduct.

The Town Council provides funding to many local organisations ranging from guides and scouts to sports clubs and senior citizens. We also provide the main funding for the Tourist Information Centre, The Millennium Green and Honiton Charter Day. As a community we all benefit from the many hours that volunteers work in clubs, societies and organisations that benefit many of us and our families. They need our support.

With the reduction in government funding to Devon County and East Devon District Councils we have been aware that many Honiton organisations and other local services may see a reduction in their funding in the coming year. Many of these have yet to be announced. As a Town Council we are the only tier of local authority allowed to increase funding from the precept. We therefore decided to raise the community charge in the year 2011/12 from 66 pence per week to 78 pence per week per household. This will allow the Town Council to increase its grants from £5,000 per year to a sum of £15,000. This will also allow us to support organisations who may find it difficult to continue with a reduction in funding.

As you will have read in the papers East Devon District Council dealt a severe blow to the town by withdrawing the Lace Walk site for the Community Centre just as we were about to start building. There is a continuing need for more community facilities and the Town Council remains committed to providing these. The increase in the precept also includes funding to allow the Council to proceed with the project when the District Council has identified an alternative site.

The 'Big Society' is nothing new in Honiton but it needs financial support. The Town Council has been leading the way in working with volunteer groups and youth organisations to achieve real change in the Glen. This has seen a tremendous transformation from an area where people were nervous about visiting, to an open welcoming area with spring flowers and flowering shrubs. Honiton's flower beds and hanging baskets are another area which has benefitted from local sponsorship and community support following the withdrawal of District Council funding. There will no doubt be other 'opportunities' for community support in the coming year. The Town Council has a continuing role of supporting the community and these issues will be amongst others considered by the Policy Committee.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

St. Michael's Ward

M.R. ALLEN	50 Marker Way, Honiton, EX14 2EN	46755
A.B. BOOM	1 Lilley Walk, Honiton, EX14 2EA	548745
Mrs S.A. CASSON	2 Bramble Lane, Exeter Road Honiton EX14 1AS	45367
N. J. CORNWELL	15 Woodmans Cres. EX14 2DY	47478
P.E. FLEMING	3 Glanvill Way, Honiton EX14 2GD	43388
J.B. TAYLOR	The Annexe, Beechwood, Feniton, EX14 3ED	
M.J. TEARE	18 Cypress Close, EX14 2YW	46463
V.C. WHITLOCK	30 Rosemount Lane, EX14 1RJ	43959

St. Paul's Ward

Miss V. ASH	3 Hillside, Combe Raleigh Honiton EX14 4TJ	42028
R.E. COOMBS	9 Hill Crescent, EX14 2HY	47347
J.P. CORKE	19 The Orchard, Otter Valley Park EX14 4PT	47437
R.A. FARNHAM	Golesworthy Cottage, 16 Dowell Street EX14 1LT	44723
D FOSTER	17 Roundball Close EX14 2NU	07868 335612
Mrs S. GROVES	8 Gronau Close, EX14 2YT	47654
P. HALSE	Eddystone, Langford Road Honiton EX14 1QA	43854
Mrs V.A. HOWARD	Hale Farm Cottage, Axminster Road Honiton, EX14 9TQ	47127
Mrs M.D. MORGAN	8 Kings Road, Honiton EX14 1HW	46933

TOWN CLERK: Mrs. Lyn Hargood

DEPUTY CLERK: Mrs. Sarah Jenkins

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