

## Media Release

For Immediate Release

13th September 2017

### Honiton Town Council Looks to the Future New Councillors Needed

Honiton Town Council invites applications from members of the Community who wish to be considered for co-option as Town Councillors. Two new Councillors were recently elected unopposed to vacancies in St Pauls Ward, but vacancies exist for a further 5 Councillors to join the council. The Council has been reviewing the reasons for its well publicised recent difficulties and has put in place a programme of actions to address outstanding issues and to move forward with a new programme of service to the Honiton community

#### Addressing Council Difficulties

Honiton Town Council has experienced considerable turbulence in recent months. This has been due to a significant number of issues having arisen, many in connection with the construction of the new Beehive Community Complex. Among other things, the Council has experienced a Judicial Review, resignations of one third of its councillors, staff absence and resignations, audit problems, a police investigation and a series of code of conduct complaints about councillors.

Members recently met informally to acknowledge and discuss the many problems that the Council faced and to recognize the importance of their mission to serve the community in Honiton. At a subsequent Town Council meeting in August the Council resolved to take several steps to set a new tone, addressing the issues of the past as expeditiously as possible and moving forward to work on new projects for the benefit of the community.

The initiatives, that the council has prioritised include working to provide new allotments for Town residents, leading an initiative to provide a focus on tourism in Honiton, improving communications within the Town particularly through social media, leading the development of the new Neighbourhood Plan and working with others to ensure that The Community Complex, which is now operating, continues to flourish while ensuring that it serves all sections of the Town Community.



A number of councillors have recently discovered that they were subject to investigation by the monitoring officer for Council standards, following allegations from a former Councillor. They were subsequently cleared of any wrongdoing and have spoken about their experience of being subject to such an investigation and of the importance of all involved with the Town Council, past and present embracing the future and leaving the past behind.

**Mayor Cllr John Zarczynski** said *“ Having been involved with the Council over many years I have witnessed both the best and the worst in Council life. As Mayor I am determined that the Council will rise above the arguments of the recent past and show just what a Council that is united and focused can achieve on behalf of the community”*

**Cllr Caroline Kolek** commented, *“Those of us in elected positions can easily be distracted by criticism and unfair personal attacks but our council has pledged itself to move forward and I want us to set a clear example by doing so. We have lots to do and I look forward to working with our new councillors on the many projects planned.”*

### **Co-option of New Town Councillors**

Five vacancies exist for new town councillors and as electoral procedures have now been offered and not taken up Honiton Town Council have been authorised to co-opt the additional Councillors. Co-option is a process where eligible members of the community who are interested in serving on the council can put themselves forward for appointment by the council to fill a vacancy until the next Council elections take place.

To be eligible for co-option a person must live or work within 3 miles of the Town boundary, be of good character and be willing to attend council meetings and work with elected councillors to take collective decisions in relation to council business.

Anyone interested in being considered for a role as a co-opted councillor should write to the Acting Town Clerk by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September giving brief details about themselves and confirming that they meet the residence criteria.

All applicants will be invited to the Town Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September. They will be asked to make a short statement to the council saying why they wish to be considered for co-option on to the council following which councillors may ask some questions. The council will then consider all co-option candidates and vote to decide who they will then co-opt.

Please contact the Acting Town Clerk in the event of any queries about the co-option process.



**ENDS**

**Contact**

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