

MONDAY, 17TH JUNE 2024.

NEWSLETTER

We have a new Mayor. Tony McCollum has been elected as Mayor for the year 2024-25, with the help of Serena Sexton as his Deputy. We have also welcomed three new Councillors on board; Helen Turner, who was the local Scout Leader for over 30 years, David Hayler, a long-time local resident and businessman, and Melvyn Baldock, who is a paramedic trainer.

There is also other good news in that the Council has been awarded Foundation status by the National Association of Local Councils, which indicates that we are operating a well-run organisation. But we are not stopping there; our plans are to do whatever is necessary to attract Quality status and hopefully the top award of Quality Gold over the next couple of years.

Along with many other local towns we will this year be celebrating 50 years since becoming a town council (rather than a Borough Council).

One major victory we have achieved since our last bulletin is that our efforts, along with those from the other towns affected, have persuaded Devon County Council that any decision to introduce parking charges to our High Streets would be very much against the tide of public opinion, and those plans have therefore been shelved – a cause for celebration. I am sure we would all like to thank everyone who signed the petition, which was paramount in the right decision being reached.

East Devon District Council are, like many other Councils, struggling to make ends meet. As a consequence, they are closing a number of lower graded toilets, unless town councils are willing to take them on. Whilst there will be a significant cost implication for us we felt it was important to keep the King Street toilets available for use and so they will be transferred to the Town Council April 2025 with the requirement for the Town Council to provide one accessible public convenience for 10 years. We may need to reduce the number of cubicles to keep the costs down, but at least there will be a facility available.

Our new maintenance man has been very busy around town, particularly in Roundball Wood, repairing steps, walkways and fences, as well as generally tidying up various parts of the town. Hopefully you will begin to see a difference, particularly once he has completed his training to be able to work close to the highway. Very soon you will see him around in his van, which will have the Council logo on the sides. We are also about to repair and renovate our Council notice boards and town entrance signs, and all these measures will help to give a better impression of our town.



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On Easter Saturday we ran a trial to see whether the use of gazebos on the market would attract additional traders. We borrowed ten gazebos from Cullompton Town Council, and we were delighted that 20 stallholders turned up on the day, making the market appear to be thriving again. We have now authorised the purchase of our own gazebos, along with barriers and other safety measures, so this is the first step to restoring the market as a true attraction, which will bring more visitors to the town and encourage residents to come in from outlying villages.

Finally, we have one plea for help. The toilets in Lace Walk are constantly being vandalised, which means significant expense for EDDC, as well as meaning the toilets are out of action for everyone to use whilst they are being repaired (only to be damaged again!). So, if anyone knows who is responsible or sees them in action please do inform the police. By reporting any anti-social behaviour this can help the local policing team to have a full understanding of when and where we have issues. It can then look to patrol these areas and look at crime prevention. The options are 999 or 101 by telephone, report online via the Devon and Cornwall police website or attend Honiton police station (1000hrs – 1500hrs) Monday to Saturday.

We are planning to introduce additional CCTV cameras around the town, including coverage of the toilets, but in the meantime, we are reliant on you as our eyes and ears. Incidentally CCTV monitoring is being transferred to Exeter, which will provide us with 24-hour constant coverage, so once that happens the town should be an even safer place than it is already.

If you want to know more about what the Council has been doing in the last year the annual reports from the Chairman, as well as the Chairs of all the Committees, are available at the Council offices in the Beehive and on the Council's website: [Annual Report 2023-2024.pdf](#) (honiton.gov.uk)

Why not come in, have a coffee and some cake and see what the Beehive is putting on at the same time.

Tony McCollum
Mayor of Honiton

