

# NEWSLETTER



*Honiton  
Town  
Council  
Office*

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

This is the time of year when councils across the country are setting their budgets for the next financial year and Honiton is no exception. This particular round is a bit different to previous years as we have had quite a few major areas of expenditure for which we have to cater. You may well have heard that the Government has determined that local councils are to be reorganised into unitary authorities. This will see the demise of both East Devon District Council and Devon County Council, and all our towns and parishes will now only be dealing with the new unitary authority, details of which have not yet been decided.

East Devon DC has a significant number of assets and services which will need to be allocated, either to the towns and parishes or to the new authority. They have indicated they are keen to ensure these assets are protected and come under the control of local councils rather than some overarching authority that doesn't have local interests at heart, with their focus being on the services they are required to provide by law, such as social care and children's services. Therefore, it is likely that will have the opportunity, to acquire some of these assets, but there are legal processes and checks which must be abided by and there is a consequent cost in legal fees.



*Mayor  
Making  
6th June  
2025*

# NEWSLETTER



Armed  
Forces  
Day 28th  
June 2025

We consider it vital to maintain local control over Honiton's important places, to ensure they are well maintained and available for our residents and visitors to use and enjoy; we cannot be certain that will be the case if they become the responsibility of another authority and we are therefore setting aside sufficient funding to acquire them.

The Council continues to support the Beehive which is leased to and operated by Honiton Community Complex, including with Council 3 years' financial support and performance targets. The new 30-year long term lease is intended to secure the future of the at Honiton's community centre, its Board, volunteers and employees. The Council is working to promote low carbon operation of the Beehive.

We are also concerned about the potential cost of making the wall safe at the corner of Dowell Street and High Street. This is a party wall with a private residence which has shown alarming signs of movement and is consequently a risk to the public, with fears that it could, at some point, collapse. We have gained advice about whether the wall is the Council's responsibility and it does appear that we most likely do have an obligation to make it safe.



Armed  
Forces  
Day 28th  
June 2025

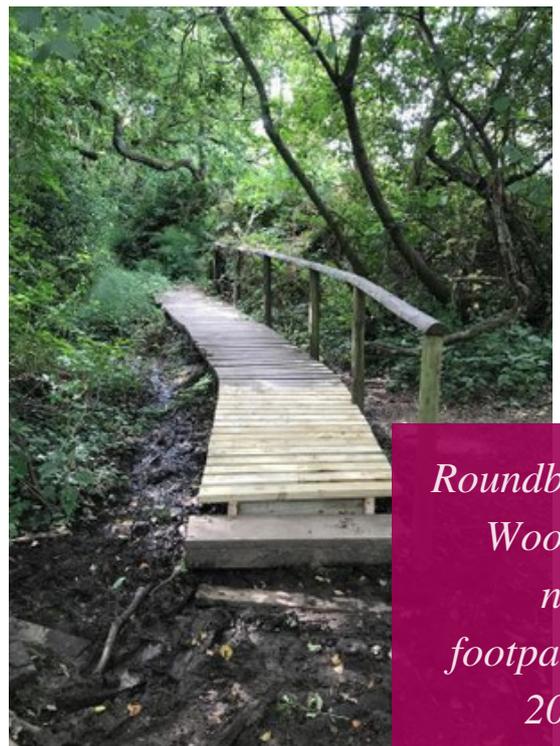
# NEWSLETTER



*New Town  
Entrance  
signs 2025*

We have already spent significant sums on obtaining advice about methods of shoring up, monitoring the movement and introducing interim precautions. We have now put the renovation to tender and anticipate the appointment of a contractor to undertake the work very soon, which will be costing a substantial amount (we cannot reveal the actual sum for contractual reasons until accounts are published). So, we have needed to make provision for this work to be completed.

One thing which we need to do differently is the way in which we communicate with the public. We have run several surveys, public surgeries and events, as well as trying to get our voice heard through the media and publishing various information documents, but the response has been disappointing. Consequently, we don't feel we are getting our message across, and with the advent of unitary authorities and the lead up to the changes that will inevitably occur we have to engage differently so that you are kept aware of what is going on. We are therefore planning to recruit a new member of staff to undertake this role and possibly helping with various events we run, so we hope you will notice a difference through much better communication once they are in post.



*Roundball  
Wood -  
new  
footpaths  
2025*

MONDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY 2026.

# NEWSLETTER

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Councils are recommended to retain a certain amount in reserves to cover its risk, which is generally to allow for 3-6 months expenditure in case of emergencies, as well as for any unexpected bills that must be paid. For several years Honiton Town Council's reserves have been very low compared with other councils in Devon and this has caused some consternation amongst councillors and the Responsible Finance Officer. It has therefore been decided to bolster our reserves by £115k, mainly because of the uncertainty that local government reorganisation is bringing to our sector, to cover 3-6 months spend, but also to bring us more into line with those other councils.

There have been several other necessary increases in our budget across our normal heads of expenditure and so the various committees were asked to reduce their bids to what is needed rather than what is desirable, and some projects have consequently been set aside. But even so the final sums meant a sizeable increase in the precept. From the residents' perspective Honiton's element of the overall precept is relatively small, but it will still mean an increase of about £6.75 per month for a band D property. This is not something we desire, and we have tried to keep our budget to acceptable levels, but the major costs coming down the line are something for which we must cater, and our only real income is through the precept.

We have a duty to be as responsible as possible with your money including being prepared for the changes that lie ahead. The services we need to offer are in the best interests of the town which regrettably have cost implications. We do hope you will notice a difference as the year proceeds and you can be assured of our best efforts in making Honiton a desirable place to live and visit.

Andrew Pearsall  
Chair, Honiton Town Council

