

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013

2012/2013 has been a year full of celebration. We started the summer with the Queen's Jubilee an opportunity for communities across the land to come together in an event unique to our country and commonwealth. The community of Honiton displayed this spirit of celebration wonderfully with a picnic in the park, a children's sports day and a variety show. These were just a few of the ways in which this town joined in with the rest of the Nation.

We also had the Olympics, whether or not you were lucky enough to get tickets or watch it from the comfort of your own home it was an event that inspired great national pride and also highlighted the importance of investment in local sports facilities.

The Town Council has been working to develop our community and the lives of those who live in it by improving the facilities in our open spaces, ensuring our voice is heard to improve the railway link, promoting recycling and putting in a successful bid for Parishes Together funding to buy much needed equipment for various indoor and outdoor activities in agreement with seven other parishes.

With the adverse weather conditions we have seen this last year the Town Council has also been updating the Emergency Planning Policy to ensure that key members have been identified and a list drawn up of contact details of people who can provide resources and help should the need arise.

During the past year your Town Council has been working hard on your behalf including producing our Talk of the Town newsletter every quarter, marshalling the Hot Pennies, Charter Day, Armed Forces Day and working closely with the Chamber of Commerce in promoting the Town and it's businesses which was highlighted by a successful late night Christmas shopping evening and concert and Antiques Festival.

The Town Council has also been able to assist many local groups with grants. Many people were involved and worked hard to run and support these groups and I would like to thank each one on behalf of us for all that they have done. We have also continued to support the young people and have been able to provide funding to support a youth worker at the Youth Centre.

Councillors continue being involved in essential community organisations such as Charter Day, Hot Pennies, Community Cinema, Roundball Wood, The Glen and Millennium Green to name but a few.

We have also reorganised our various committees and now have a dedicated planning team focusing on all planning issues in the town, a policy committee focusing on ensuring our policies are up to date and relevant to us and a finance committee focusing on ensuring that your money is spent effectively.

The Town Council has also had to get to grips with the National Local Planning Framework and a considerable time has been spent consulting on the draft local plan proposed by East Devon District Council.

Cllr David Foster - Mayor



FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance Committee is a new committee for the Town Council. Finances previously came under the umbrella of the Policy Committee. However the remit of the Policy Committee and the amount of work undertaken by the Council led to longer agendas and the decision to establish a separate committee to look at Town Council finances.

The committee which meets quarterly has an oversight of the finances, including payments, salaries and grants and makes recommendations to the full Town Council. The committee is also responsible for recommending the annual precept and grants to Town Council.

The Town Council agreed the level of the precept for 2012-13 at £167,793. This was the proportion of the Council Tax that the Town Council received from EDDC and equates to £40.38 per annum for a Band 'D' home and was not increased from the 2011-12 financial year.

Councillors strive to reduce costs and Honiton Council Tax payers were, in the last financial year, charged less for council services than those living in our neighbouring towns of Axminster, Seaton and Sidmouth. However the Town Council has made the decision to raise the precept for 2013-14 to £176,143. This is to meet increased general maintenance costs and changes in pension legislation. It equates to an increase of approx 4 pence per week per household.

In this financial year the Town Council made much needed grants to local organisations totalling £17,350. This included funding to the Tourist Information Centre, and essential services such as Citizens Advice and TRIP as well as the smaller organisations within our community.

The Town Council employs the equivalent of 3 full time staff. The budget for wages fixed at national agreed rates was £56,900. Due to changes in legislation the Council will be required to adopt the local government pension scheme. This will increase the salaries budget in the coming financial year and accounts for a large proportion of the increase in the precept.

This final quarter of the financial year sees the commencement of the building of the long awaited Community Complex. There has been some concern that this will see an increase in the Council Tax in coming years. This is not the case. The loan of £975,000 is over a period of 30 years at a rate of between 3.54% and 3.71% for the life of the loan. In real monetary terms this is the equivalent of a mortgage on ten semi-detached houses at a low fixed rate mortgage. We consider this as an investment in the future of the town and have ensured that the repayments have not led to an increase in our current budget.

Cllr Vernon Whitlock - Chair Finance Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

It was decided at the beginning of the new Council year that the Planning Committee should be reduced to a smaller number of Councillors, with equal representation from both wards. This would allow those Councillors with a particular interest in planning issues to dedicate time to deal with the growing complexities of the planning system on both a national and local level.

Although all Councillors receive the agendas and are free to attend and speak at each meeting only the members may vote. We welcome members of the public. We have found it helpful when applicants come to speak about their application. We can, with Councillors' agreement, re-order the agenda to accommodate this if necessary.

Although at the outset of the year Cllr Corke was the Deputy Chair, he had to step down due to personal circumstances. We thank him for his contribution and support over the previous year. Cllr Zarczynski was elected in his stead.

The Planning Committee meets fortnightly and by 5th Feb ninety-six applications had been considered, a mix of applications concerning private dwellings, potential tree works, and /or business premises within the Conservation Area. It needs to be noted that HTC acts in the capacity of consultee, we can only support or raise objections to applications. EDDC remains the determining authority. At the last Annual Town Meeting a decision was still awaited on the future of Holyshute House. Despite our best efforts, having been turned down by EDDC, this application went to Appeal and was determined by the Inspector after a meeting at which representatives of HTC and residents took part. Following her site visit, she found in favour of Churchill Retirement Living and currently the site is undergoing development. As a Council we have to accept the grants of permission, even though we have expressed our objections and thereafter we seek to work amicably with applicants for the sake of good and positive community relationships.

HTC has delegated authority from EDDC to determine advertisement applications. We have a clear policy as to what is deemed acceptable which is made available where possible to all new businesses in the town. We are shortly revising this policy to take into account business needs whilst still being sensitive to the requirements of the Conservation Area and listed buildings.

The Council has been deeply involved in the Local Plan consultation process, and our final comments were submitted in time for the 14th January deadline. We now await the approved version from the Planning Inspector. There will be a formal hearing in the summer at which the Town Council will be represented.

Cllr Liz Tirard - Chair Planning Committee

ANNUAL POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Most Town Councillors are members of the Policy Committee, which meets every month, about two weeks before the monthly Full Council meeting. The Committee's responsibilities are to make recommendations to Full Council on most policy and procedural matters. On some policy matters the Committee receives reports from working groups or from lead councillors on particular topics – I am particularly grateful for the hard work they have put in, which greatly helps the Committee in its deliberations.

Since the start of the Council year last May, our work has included:

- reviewing the Council's Service Plan and producing a shorter and simpler version for use alongside the more detailed version
- reviewing and refining Emergency Planning proposals and Risk Management strategies
- establishing that the Council can use the new General Power of Competence, enabling innovation and improvement to services
- refining the Council's grant-making policy, to emphasise priorities
- reviewing the Council's Complaints procedure and Community Engagement Strategy
- updating Standing Orders to reflect the Localism Act and the new Code of Conduct for councillors
- reviewing and revising the Council's Media Communications Policy and Training Policy
- progressing, with neighbouring parishes, initiatives to be funded under the District Council's Parishes Together scheme
- continuing to research possible sites for allotments
- devising an Open Space Policy and an Environment Policy
- establishing a policy with regard to visiting town criers
- making recommendations relating to the Definitive Map Review affecting rights of way
- progressing various aspects of the Beehive project

Cllr Nick Cornwell - Chair Policy Committee

HONITON TOWN COUNCIL STATEMENT INCOME/EXPENDITURE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2013

	2011/12 £	2012/13 £		2011/12 £	2012/13 £
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
Precept	167793.00	167793.00	Council Expenses	6694.32	7650.61
Street Market Income	44510.16	39364.50	Subscriptions	1488.50	1271.50
Bank Interest	2290.78	2098.79	Environment and Tourism	36858.20	35386.81
HMRC	0.00	1535.56	Promotion	8502.62	0.00
DCC	0.00	420.00	Grants	23964.69	19623.41
EDDC	0.00	2739.75	Democratic Core Services	15689.23	0.00
Insurance Claims	4879.22	0.00	Premises	11107.56	6894.11
Rent	0.00	270.00	Staffing Costs	69954.91	94739.25
Donations/Sponsorship	14822.00	3628.45	Administration	0.00	18912.40
Misc Income	0.00	210.00	Market running costs	0.00	8316.27
Locality Budget - Footpath 7	0.00	3000.00	Misc (prior minor adj)	0.00	42.78
Beehive - Fundraising, Donations & Grants	14822.00	1120534.13	Ongoing Grants	0.00	2845.00
TOTAL INCOME	249117.16	1341594.18	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	174260.03	195682.14
			Transfer earmarked figure	0.00	22454.48
			Sub total	174260.03	173227.66
			Net Income/Expenditure	74857.13	1168366.52

HONITON TOWN COUNCILLORS 2013- 2014



Cllr. Mike Allen**
01404 46755
St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. Nick Cornwell
01404 47478
St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. David Foster
Mayor
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. Sue Groves
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. Peter Halse**
Deputy Mayor
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. Sharon Pavey
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr Gary Elliot
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. John Taylor
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. Vernon Whitlock
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St. Michael's Ward



Cllr. Vivienne Ash
01404 42028
St. Paul's Ward



Cllr. Roy Coombs
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St. Paul's Ward



Cllr Les Bayliss
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St. Paul's Ward



Cllr. Peter Corke
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Cllr. Les Lunt
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St. Paul's Ward



Cllr. Marianne Harman
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St. Paul's Ward



Cllr. Vera Howard
01404 47127
St. Paul's Ward

** Also District Councillor



Cllr. Liz Tirard
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St. Paul's Ward



Cllr John Zarczynski
01404 234087
St. Paul's Ward



Chetna Jones
Town Clerk
01404 42957



Sarah Jenkins
Deputy Clerk
01404 42957



Carolyn Bowles
Town Clerk's Assistant
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Mike Vernon
Town Clerk's Assistant
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Tony McCollum
Market Manager
07980 922696



Dave Smyth
Market Assistant
(calls via Market Manager)