

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the second bulletin from Honiton Town Council, through which we will be keeping you updated about what we are doing on your behalf. I suppose the first thing to report is that the Councillors met for a day's session in order to discuss what they all see as the issues that need resolving around the town. These have now been prioritised, so that we can work out where the money we have available needs to be spent. However, that is not set in stone. We will very soon be asking what you think we should be concentrating our resources on, so please join in the discussion and help us to formulate our plans for the next four years. All we would ask of you is to remember that we have a limited budget, and that some areas of responsibility lie with either East Devon District Council (EDDC) or Devon County Council (DCC), and where that is the case we can only use our influence to encourage them to make the 'right' decisions

The issue that gained most support amongst Councillors at their strategy session was the replacement of sports pitches in the town. Almost all our pitches, especially those for young people, are either unsuitable or have not been replaced following building developments. The Council is working with EDDC, the local MP and the various sports clubs to identify locations which can be developed into suitable sites for our sporting heroes. It will be one of our top priorities and we have therefore formed a working group to address this specific issue. But it will take time, even though there is a real will to succeed.

One other major issue for the town is Devon County Council's aim of introducing parking charges on the High Street. We are not alone, as it is targeting a number of towns, with whom we have been liaising. We issued a questionnaire jointly with the Chamber of Commerce to seek residents' views and received over 1,200 responses, with only a handful supporting the proposal. We have also co-signed a joint letter from all the affected towns pointing out the deficiencies of the proposal and the lack of evidence in support of it. We hope we can discourage DCC from proceeding, but you will need to watch this space.

MONDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER 2023.

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One thing we have done is to support EDDC in encouraging the shop keepers around the town to spruce up their shop fronts. We would like to thank all those who have made an effort and we hope you have noticed how much smarter the town is now looking. However, there are still some properties that are affecting the general appearance and we call upon the owners to follow the examples already set, so that Honiton becomes a more pleasant place in which to walk around and shop.

We are also investigating how we can improve the market, which is long overdue I'm sure you'll agree. We have arranged a Christmas market in the Mackarness Hall on 18th November and we are making arrangements for regular Farmers' Markets once a month on a Saturday. However, the main improvement needs to be with the weekly street market and our initial thoughts are to require all stallholders to use gazebos provided by the Council, thereby making it look like a proper market. We hope this will encourage locals and visitors to attend the market for its own sake, and new traders to stick with it, but there are logistical problems we have to iron out, and full Council has to agree the purchase of the gazebos. If you have any ideas about how we can improve the market, please let Councillor Rob Sexton know at RobertSexton@honiton.gov.uk

I'm sure you all know Dave Retter, our Town Crier, who has been undertaking that role for many years. The Council advertised for a Deputy Town Crier and we had good interest. Thank you to all those applying. After interviews the Council has agreed to appoint Caroline Kolek as the Deputy Town Crier, who will learn from Dave and be active at events.

Our annual round of grants have been awarded and most of those who applied have received funding, to the tune of £39,500 in total. These awards will make significant differences to the various groups and charities who were successful and if you want to see where that money has been allocated then please visit the Financial Information section on our website. That's all for now.

Helen Hurford,
Chair of Honiton Town Council

