

Hatherleigh Town Council Chair Report May 2022

This annual report marks my 6th year as Chair and Mayor of Hatherleigh Town Council. I thank Councillors and the Clerk for their continued support for my position, but it won't last forever!

My report last year began describing the cusp we approached for a national release of covid lockdown measures and a return to face to face meetings.

The Coronavirus risk was ever present with the arrival of variants during winter months which swept thru our community.

The vaccines for most brought less severe symptoms but we should be reminded of the devastating impact this virus has brought to our community over these last few years.

It was with great vision the creation and publication last November of a book which marks the wave of coronavirus hitting Hatherleigh as all the more significant, and I'd like to pay tribute to Cllr. Donna Lewis for her inspiration and dedication in pulling together the voices of the community in her book "When Hatherleigh Stood Still". It is a tremendous achievement!

Last year also marked the 7 yearly cycle of the Beating of the Bounds walk. This was a successful event with over 250 people taking part, an achievement ensured in partnership with the Moor Management Committee and the many volunteers.

Another sad loss this year was the death of Norman, our committed litter picker and Island Park guardian, he will be sorely missed. We are though grateful to Mr Cranleigh for taking up the litter picking mantle.

Moving to Council business, it was welcome to have for the majority of the time the full compliment of 10 councillors. Resignations were received from Claire Gladstone and Peter Back and we welcomed new councillors Mark Reddaway and Helen Orbidans.

Moving on to some of the main attentions this council has been focussed on:

New town signage – following the business survey early 2021 and the need for improved town signage, the business working group has spent time investigating designs and costs. Finding new locations hasn't been as straightforward as wished but two signs promoting what Hatherleigh has to offer are now ordered.

Island Park Playpark equipment – following the 2021 annual safety report a number of safety issues were highlighted. Advice and quotes were then sought from playground companies and advised condemning the zip wire. Options for new equipment raised alarming financial costs. A community consultation was created to better understand the needs of park users, and fundraising has begun with a successful start with grants received from the National Lottery and the Moor Management Committee.

Decisions on exactly what pieces of equipment to install are yet to be made.

Hatherleigh Market Development – the houses are been built at a steady pace with an approximate one third of the site completed and occupied. Demolition of the last old sheep shed finally happened and the new temporary market space was created with a marquee and market stalls. Unfortunately a winter storm damaged the marquee and so market trading has moved to

the Community Centre. With a tremendous effort from Debbie Kimber and her team the towns Tuesday market has continued with success.

We joined NABMA, the National Association of British Markets for advice on how best to navigate the markets future thru this transition. And we submitted a formal expression of interest to the developer Kingswood Homes to investigate the possibility of taking on a long term lease for the new pannier building once built. This was somewhat negated before Christmas with the announcement that Kingswood wish to continue their lease under the Hatherleigh Market management team.

Discussions and debate continued over the suitability of Kingswood Homes' open plan design of the new pannier building and how this town council could help facilitate the inclusion of additional walls and doors. Grants were applied for with support from West Devon Borough Council officers and Devon Communities Together, all to no avail.

Thankfully this has all now been superseded by a submission from Kingswood Homes for a planning amendment to the design incorporating 4 sides to enclose the building. The developers now have a willingness to fund the alterations if a loan agreement with Hatherleigh Market can be agreed.

Traffic Issues:

Road past Coop – Meetings were held with Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council over the future of the road between Bridge St and the Market housing development. There had been historic concerns over the need to update this road up to an adoptable highway standard (ie pavement, street lights) once this road became a main housing access.

Discussions and feedback have established that the owners - WDBC, have no intention to upgrade this road due to complex financial reasons.

The lack of parking restrictions on this busy road at the Coop junction also exacerbates the daily chaos from shoppers, buses, delivery lorries, surgery visitors and residents. Frustrations at the lack of action had been vented to WDBC, and was followed with the re-painting of yellow lines at the Coop and a promise to step up enforcement.

One resident, Mr Hall, had the foresight to engage both WDBC and the Coop store in trying to establish a 'one hour free parking' ticket receipt for the carpark. All to no avail.

Traffic Calming (outside Vets / Island Park / Moor View junction) – following resident concerns over pedestrian safety we revisited requests to Devon County Council on the need for more traffic calming. The very narrow, flat path outside the vets, the busy cut thru road next to Island Park and the lack of pavement from Moor View to the Industrial Estate were issues raised. Devon County Council have said funds and complexities prohibit them from carrying out any works. Apart from adding an additional 'Playground Ahead' sign. Although it has since been noted the Moor View footpath will be taken care of by the market development section 106 monies.

Resident Parking Scheme

Following a request by a Moor View resident we investigated the Devon County Council resident parking scheme, after a brief consultation exercise it was clear there is no appetite for such a scheme.

Other issues – aside from our bread and butter issues of liaising with DCC and WDBC over matters of bins, drains, street cleaning, footpath works, grass cutting etc, we saw the completion of the replacement fence for the Jubilee Footpath.

For the first time we took responsibility for road closure measures for Remembrance Sunday.

And the town clock restored by Mr Munn now has a new home in the Community Centre.

Events attended:

Councillors attended (in period costume) the Okehampton 150th Railway Celebrations which coincided with the fantastic news of the return of a regular passenger service to Exeter.

Congratulations must go to all who campaigned for this re-instatement. We must now support the campaign to see a connective bus service.

Councillors also attended the re-opening of the new Hatherleigh Cricket Clubhouse.

Looking forward to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee the town council wanted to give the children of Hatherleigh a commemorative gift. We were delighted that Jane Payne from Hatherleigh Pottery took up the challenge and made 200 little commemorative bowls.

As Mayor thanks once again must be expressed to all volunteers in all sorts of clubs, groups and committees who keep the town of Hatherleigh such a vibrant and interesting place to call home. And of course to those who work for the town council keeping the towns areas and facilities in good condition.

Not forgetting its town councillors who do their best in addressing difficult issues and spend their time as representatives on other committees. And saving the best till last, thank you to Rosemary our clerk who we'd be lost without!

Clare Tyson
Mayor of Hatherleigh
May 2022