

## Hatherleigh Town Council Chair Report May 2023

To begin the review of the year I'll start with some smaller housekeeping updates.

The Town Council have now set up generic email addresses for councillor emails; the move to online banking is currently being investigated; and the Cemetery Regulations have been updated and a specific email address created for such correspondence.

The position for Street Caretaker was re-advertised and welcomed Mr Jon Tagg to take over this role. We also re-advertised the position for a volunteer Snow Warden and welcomed Jake Barrs to this position.

We took the decision to cover the costs of public liability insurance for the services provided by the street caretaker and toilet cleaner. And we had an operational review with the Christmas lights team.

Moving onto the public areas in town. Island Park has received two new pieces of play park equipment from a successful fundraising campaign from Cllr. Lewis and Mr Adam Hill. The old zip wire is being slowly dismantled and once gone this area awaits another fundraising campaign for its replacement.

Millennium Corner also awaits a revamp following the completion of building works on a neighbouring property. As is the bus shelter by the Co-op awaiting quotes for roof repairs.

Another project achievement following the grant received from West Devon Borough Council High Street Fund has seen the installation of new town signage and the completion of a new town website. Raise Digital have created a superb website to showcase all Hatherleigh has to offer for residents and visitors alike.

On the same theme moving onto projects this council has financially supported is the Visitor Centre. The value of a walk-in facility benefits residents and visitors in many different ways. And a huge thanks must go to the many volunteers who enable this to run.

Smaller projects given support this year to other organisations has seen the installation of a British Legion memorial bench next to the school, unveiled by Michael Morpurgo. We have funded litter picking equipment for school children; Okehampton Transport for the service it provides to Hatherleigh residents; and to Roz Chard our Town Crier.

At this point I should mention the necessary decision to raise the precept this year. With hindsight we perhaps should have considered small increases year on year but with events forcing a cost of living crisis our costs in turn had risen and may continue to rise and we were left with no choice but to increase the precept or face cutting the service we provide.

Royal announcements brought an unprecedented run of events for the town. In June we saw the community come together to celebrate the Queens Jubilee for 70 years on the throne. An event was held in the town square and Jubilee bowls made by local potter Jane Payne were provided from the council to children.

However in September the announcement of the Queens death brought a 10 day period of national mourning whereby the council had to follow strict protocol. Once again the community came together to pay respects for the Queens long service. A condolence book was made

available in the Community Centre, tributes were paid and appropriate statements published on our website.

In the last few weeks members of the community came together again to celebrate King Charles III Coronation. Events were held around town and again commemoration Coronation badges provided to children.

**Hatherleigh Market Development:** Last year I reported on the news that Kingswood Homes had submitted and was given planning approval for a design amendment to upgrade what will be the new pannier market building. This meant enclosing the whole structure with walls to provide a weatherproof, secure facility. The cost however would need to be borne by the community.

As I drafted this report I had typed regrets that a community response could not be found to support Hatherleigh Market in burdening these costs... however in the last couple weeks a fresh proposal has been formulated by Mr Burrow and Bailey in discussion with Kingswood Homes proposing a vision whereby the Town Council could lease to purchase the new market area to secure the facility for future ownership for the town.

The Council meeting that follows will show if this proposal will be carried forward.

As for the development as a whole, I can report that all the houses have been completed and I believe are now occupied. The flats, shop units and market are currently under construction.

**Planning and Traffic** - two issues that are always a discussion point. Following separate resident concerns over the issue of future planning and traffic speeds, the council had put out two appeals for volunteers to help create a Neighbourhood Planning Group and a Speed Watch Group. Take up so far has been too low as yet to initiate either group.

Following discussions and meeting with Devon County Council earlier in the year we created a Highway Priority List with which to lobby for increased traffic calming measures around town and parking restrictions closer to the school. We still await feedback from DCC on the matter.

This annual report is only a brief summing up of the years events and for a full round up of all the minutes from this year and previous years visit the Town Council website.

This report marks the end of my 7<sup>th</sup> year as Chair and Mayor of Hatherleigh Town Council. With it being election year for district and town/parish councils I have decided not to stand as councillor this time and a new chairman will be elected following this Annual Parish Meeting.

Its been a pleasure to work with every councillor over the years, and of course under the guidance of Rosemary, our clerk, and I may well regret standing down.

I wish the new Chair/Mayor every success in this role it has been a privilege to serve the town during all the highs and lows covering a complexity of issues.

And so for the last time I extend my thanks as Mayor to all members of local clubs, groups and committees who bring vibrancy and interest to the town of Hatherleigh.

Clare Tyson  
Retiring Chairman/Mayor of Hatherleigh  
May 2023