

Ilfracombe Town Council Annual Report Year ending 2008/9

Foreword from the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Geoff Fowler.

What a first full year it's been for the Ilfracombe Centre. With 22,000 visits being made and 10 separate organisations operating in the building, no one could say it wasn't earning its keep and the finances prove it. We are very aware of its importance to the community and that it represents the first port of call for access to advice and training for townfolk.

I would like to offer my thanks to the small but dedicated staff who not only keep the centre and the council running smoothly, but also provide an excellent litter picking service in the town.

I would also like to express my thanks to the council members and my colleagues, who offered support and advice when needed.

The Mayoress and I have had a busy but enjoyable year with some special moments. Meeting HRH Prince Edward on his visit to the town, and in particular showing him round the Ilfracombe Centre was a day to remember. The Pride in Ilfracombe Awards have provided some extraordinary and poignant moments, where members of the town have received accolades for their sterling work in our community.

Ilfracombe is moving forward and we can keep that regeneration momentum by continuing to be the best Council in Devon !

Pride in Ilfracombe

30 people have been chosen over the past year to receive a Pride in Ilfracombe award. Nominations are received from townfolk and adjudications are made by an independent panel made up of representatives within the community. Every award is unique and well deserved and the positive comments received from the winners and their family and friends help to make each occasion very special. The overall Citizen of the Year award was made to The Reverend Prebendary Nigel Jackson-Stevens. He has served the town with 25 years of dedicated service and has been a constant champion of Ilfracombe, always ready to highlight - and act on items that matter to the town.

Community

Regular Litter Meetings are held with NDC officers and community organisations, to deal with some of the issues raised by our Litter Warden and council members. Examples of the results from such meetings are recycling bins located on the High street and in the Harbour area. Extra dog bins and refurbished litter bins have also been provided. Additional work is provided by our Litter Warden in using a vacuum backpack for clearing the gutters and picking up cigarette stubs. He is fully trained and accredited with pesticide spraying and we are therefore able to make a difference in the town by clearing away weeds which clog drains and gutters.

Dog fouling is always a priority and the Litter Warden spends a large amount of time in cleaning up after individuals who allow their dogs to foul pavements and play areas. We are able to fine individuals who allow this to happen and working with the NDC dog warden and PSCO officers, the Litter Warden patrols the town on a daily basis.

In addition to clearing up and having the ability to fine offenders who allow their dogs to foul, the Litter Warden always carries a supply of 'dog bags' to give out to encourage responsible attitudes. These are also from the reception area in the Ilfracombe Centre.

Grants – The Town Council has supported many and varied organisations through its grants process this year. Groups such as Age Concern, Ilfracombe Museum, Blazing Sounds, the Lantern Community pre-School, Ilfracombe Youth Football club, the Scouts and Majorettes have all benefited. Others including the community-bridging twinning organisations that keep up our Towns' links with Herxheim and Ifs have also received funding.

Ilfracombe Regeneration – The efforts and planning involved for both public and private sector regeneration in the town has started to gather momentum.

The proposals for the ferry service to Wales are well in hand with deposits paid on the catamarans to be used, and consultation is being sought to provide sheltered waiting areas. It is hoped that there will be a working service by spring 2010.

The redevelopment of the Bus station has been through a public consultation, with one planning application already submitted. Work is underway on a revised proposal to take into account feedback from the planning authority and consultative bodies.

Ilfracombe Seafront - working against the clock to ensure a bid is ready to be put forward for consideration of capital funding, the 'seafront regeneration' vision has been presented by the consultants and made available for members of the public to view. Deadlines are tight – so fingers crossed for external funding to be granted to make the vision a reality.

Football pitch project, this new initiative relates to the need for much better sporting facilities in Ilfracombe. For some time now, Ilfracombe Town Football Club, Ilfracombe Arts College, the Football Association and Devon County Council have been discussing the provision of a floodlit artificial turf pitch (ATP) for the town. The project is exploring the possibility of the football club relinquishing the freehold at Marlborough Park in exchange for the freehold on a new football stadium, training facilities and car park at Killacleave.

Skate Board area - The new Skateboard Park in the Brimlands area has gained planning approval with the Concrete Surfers Confederation playing a leading role with input into the project.

Planning

There has been a noticeable reduction in Planning Applications over the last nine months due to the current economic uncertainty. Many developments that we had hoped would have progressed have been put on 'hold'. Recommendations have been provided to a revision of the Conservation Area within the Town and hopefully we have made the point that we do not wish conservation issues to prevent sensible development of the Harbour area. We are also engaged in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which is designed to identify and protect green open areas within the Town, and again we looking carefully at the Harbour area to ensure that acceptable development is not curtailed.

The Committee is pleased that a Brewery Chain eventually received planning permission for the Collingwood Hotel. The twelve-month delay in agreeing a way forward with the District Council has meant that this project is on hold at present. We believe that interpreting planning laws in a negative fashion is consequently frustrating to many developers. We would like to see an approach where the Planning Department whilst supporting planning law, would also be mindful in assisting the applicant where a noticeable economic benefit will accrue, so that major developments such as that proposed by the example above are co-ordinated, and do not suffer the delays that prove to be costly to the developer and to a town such as Ilfracombe.

The Ilfracombe Centre - At an award evening at the Guildhall in Barnstaple the president of Barnstaple & District Civic Society presented Ilfracombe Town Council with the President's Shield for its outstanding example of building restoration.

The Ilfracombe Centre opened on 22nd April 2008 and had over 22,000 people visiting in its first year – the equivalent of serving the total population of Ilfracombe twice over!

Organisations resident in the building include, North Devon Council, North Devon Pathfinder and Ilfracombe Town Council – whose representatives are available full time - providing benefits, housing, planning and environmental advice as well as computer-based training and preparation for work skills.

The Citizens Advice Bureau is a highly used resource, with advisors specifically trained in a variety of issues such as debt, housing and legal aid. Jobcentre Plus, Maximus Training, EDP Drug & Alcohol Service all run an appointment system and Devon & Cornwall Police are available for a weekly confidential drop-in.

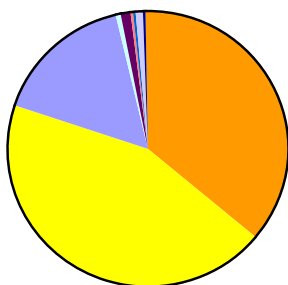
Newer additions to the team are North Devon Plus, Westcountry Energy Action and the housing charity Shelter. It was well recognised that Ilfracombe needed such a facility and the take-up from residents has proved this to be the case. The Ilfracombe Centre has proved that when organisations work in partnership and not in isolation, the results are vastly improved for the customer. The Town Council is proud to have facilitated this vital resource on behalf of the town.

Information days have also been held ranging from a Scam-wise roadshow from Trading Standards to a Digital Switchover advice day. It is the range of organisations available in the Centre that has contributed to its success as people have rarely been aware of all the support agencies available to assist them in times of need.

Financials - The Councils' Precept (budget) for the financial year 2008/9 was £123,010. This is the amount of money that is received from council tax payments as devolved by the County and District Councils. An average band D household council tax charge is £1,500, however the proportion of this as paid to Ilfracombe Town Council is £31. Residents in other local towns pay a lot more than those in Ilfracombe. Comparative figures : for Barnstaple £66, South Molton £53, Berrynarbor £45, Combe Martin £44 and Braunton £40.

Income – In addition to the Precept, extra income for this financial year was received as a result of the final grant funding to facilitate and finalise the refurbishment of the Council building (the Ilfracombe Centre). Income has also been received as result of rentals from organisations both leasing accommodation and ad-hoc room rental bookings. * An additional, notional £20,000 can be attributed to the Ilfracombe Centre income, as a result of the income that would be generated from the Town Councils rental of the office space and meeting room hire.

**Ilfracombe Town Council - Total Income - £340, 060
for year end 31 March 2009**



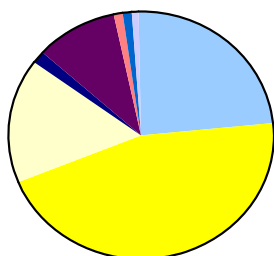
- Precept - £123,010
- Onestop capital funding - £148,874
- Ilfracombe Centre rentals - £56,351 *
- Bank Interest - £2,125
- Council tax credit - £3,249
- Contribution to Xmas Lights - £2,000
- Ebberly House Parking - £720
- Other (inc furniture reinvoice) £1,560
- Misc grants/contributions £2,171

Expenditure

This year has seen the final payments made for the refurbishment of the building under the capital project. Ongoing costs reflect increased usage and higher prices of gas & electricity charges and include staffing costs for the management, reception and maintenance of the Centre.

Additional charges raised by the audit commission to administer the grant funding payments have also been incurred. We made provision during the last couple of years to repair and refurbish some of the towns' antique paintings. They can be viewed in the Council Chamber and meetings rooms.

**Ilfracombe Town Council Total Expenditure - £328,533
for financial year ending 31 March 2009**



- Ilfracombe Centre £78,905
- Capital expend + spend on bldg - £146,184
- Grants & expend in community - £53,852
- Council tax/utility bills/tele (part*) £5,818
- admin/insurance/subscriptions- £33,065
- audit - £3,639
- Restoration of paintings £4,335
- Legal Expenses £2,735

Communication - Those wishing to make an appointment to meet their Town Councillors who hold regular surgeries, can do so at the Ilfracombe Centre – 0121 855300 or via theilfracombecentre@northdevon.co.uk You can also arrange to make an appointment with your local MP who holds his surgery for this area at the Ilfracombe Centre.

The Town Council also provide a web site - www.theilfracombecentre.co.uk which gives information on varied topics including how to contact your local council services, providing updates on news items, providing all council meeting dates in advance, listing council minutes and agendas and providing a web forum, inviting people to add their comments about the town.

Your local Ilfracombe Town Council members – (alphabetical and by Ward).

Town councilors' time is given voluntarily on behalf of the town. They do not receive expenses except, in an occasional mileage allowance if asked to attend previously arranged business for which travel is required. The serving Mayor does receive an allowance as his role involves representing the town in either a visiting or hosting capacity.

Surname	First Name	Telephone Number	Email	Ward
Blundell	Margaret	01271 862647	margaretblundell@tiscali.co.uk	Central
Butler	Wendy	01271 867836	rupertswood@talktalk.net	Central
Cooper	Leo	01271 864863	leo@region39.com	West
Courtnadge	Lynda	01271 864459	westaway@onetel.net	Central
Crabb	Paul	01271 864299	paul@crabbcontractors.com	East
Donovan	Rod	01271 862200	rod.donovan@leisureshopdirect.com	West
Donovan	Janice	01271 862200	janice.donovan@leisureshopdirect.com	West
Dymond	Michael	01271 864346	elizabeth@edymond.wanadoo.co.uk	East
Edmunds	Mike	01271 866169	mike.edmunds@northdevon.gov.uk	East
Fowler	Geoff	01271 864211	geoff.fowler@devon.gov.uk	West
Furber	Albert	01271 863035	a.furber31@btinternet.com	Central
Green	Nancy	01271 863926	scribes.r2r@btinternet.com	Central
Horne	Robin	01271 866460	robin@capstoneholidays.co.uk	West
Ley	Ron	01271 870629	ron@ronley.com	West
Pearson	Frank	01271 865057	pearsonfrank@googlemail.com	Central
Swan	John	01271 864679	john-swan@tiscali.co.uk	Central
Thompson	Bob	01271 864535	robertthompson09@aol.com	East
Webb	Philip	01271 879233	philipwebb01@gmail.com	West

Officers Contact :

Responsible Finance Officer / Finance & Office Manager - Mrs Pauline Williams 01271 855317
 Proper Officer / The Ilfracombe Centre Manager - Mrs Andrea Beacham - 01271 855318

Email - itc@northdevon.gov.uk
theilfracombecentre.gov.uk