

## Ilfracombe Town Council Annual Report Year ending March 2009/10



### **Foreword from the Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Philip Webb.**

2009/10 has been an extremely busy year for me and the Town Council. Throughout my term of office, I have endeavoured to improve communications with members of the community via my web blogs & newsletters, and strengthen relationships with other local authorities and organizations in the town.

One of my first meetings as Mayor was with the Head of Ilfracombe Arts College, who later addressed council members of her goals and aspirations. This was greatly enhanced with the announcement of the news of construction of a new '21st century' college to be undertaken as part of the Government funded - Building Schools for the Future scheme.

We have built on excellent relationships with our District Councillors and the Joint Delivery team, and hope to make progress in regeneration of areas that are important to the town. Considerable interaction with the Planning authority means that we are making inroads into the stalled planning applications that affect many areas of the town. We have the promise of £1.5m set aside by North Devon Council for regeneration of the seafront, and further monies if the feasibility of a landtrain service proves to be favourable. Two important achievements for the council this year has been the awarding of Quality Town Council status and the publication of a Strategic Plan for regeneration and development of the town, the implementation of which we will pursue in the coming years.

I would to thank the staff and members of the Council for their support and welcome our new Town Warden to the team, to help us bridge further links within the community. I hand over the mayorship to Cllr Bob Thompson, and have no hesitation in saying that we can look to the future with confidence and optimism.

### **The Council**



Following a rigorous accreditation process, a long standing aspiration for the Council was achieved this year when it was awarded Quality Town Council status. This scheme was launched following a Government Rural White Paper to provide a benchmark-standard and to develop relationships between local councils and principle authorities; thus allowing town and parish councils to achieve higher levels of professionalism and help cement their position as community leaders.

Members of the public are welcome to attend all Council and committee meetings and a time slot is available to enable them to put their views or questions forward. The Council web site has been improved and includes easy email links to all members and contact details of local services. A web-based forum site allows the people of Ilfracombe to share ideas and a regular 'blog' made by the Mayor gives members of the public an idea of Civic duties, - from attending charity events and supporting local organizations to daily matters such as meeting to discuss litter in the town. The Town Council's newsletter is now delivered to all households each quarter. Many members in addition to serving the Council and attending its committee and project meetings also act as representatives on various organizations in the town. These include the Crime prevention panel, Tyrrell Hospital management committee, the Harbour Board, Transform Street Reps and the Street Pastors. The Highways representative ensures that pressure is kept on our County Council to repair potholes and highlight any issues that affect our roads.



### **Pride in Ilfracombe**

These events have become a very popular part of Council life and each award ceremony is warmly attended by winners, their families and the people who make the nominations. This year, 20 awards have been given out celebrating many individuals. Nominations are received from townsfolk and adjudications are made by an independent panel made up of representatives within the community. The winners are from all walks of life - each having something in common - that their actions have made a positive difference to the town. They include people who have spent many years raising funds for local charities, given life long service to our local youth organisations including the Guides and Sea Cadets and those who provide voluntary dedicated commitment to our emergency services; including the Life Boats, paramedics and community police officers who have gone 'above and beyond' in their daily work. The overall Citizen of the Year award was made to Sylvia and Roy Prideaux. This was in recognition of their tireless work to raise over £30,000 for local charities and supporting the Help for Heroes fund.

## Strategy

*'To be the most prosperous, friendly, forward-looking and characterful seaside town in the South West; right-sized, sustainable and attractive to modern businesses of diverse type and size; to tourists and all residents'.*

To enable it to take a lead in the future planning, development and direction of the town Ilfracombe Town Council has developed a 17 point strategic plan to underpin the above mission statement. This sets out the approach required for the Council to use its delegated powers and engage with public and private bodies to plan and achieve goals and initiatives for the town.

In January, Ilfracombe Town Council using their Strategic plan agreed their twenty-one page response to the consultation of the North Devon and Torridge District Councils' Joint Core Strategy. This scopes the future spatial planning of northern Devon evolving over the period to 2026.

As a result of the work completed to date by the strategy group, a marketing initiative has been set up to facilitate a clear marketing approach for the town. This includes a number of small teams comprising of local marketing professionals and representatives from tourist organisations. By ensuring Ilfracombe Tourism businesses have a co-ordinated approach to marketing (including PR, publicity, events and social networking) the town's main business – tourism – will be best supported. PR, communications, events and media will help promote the town and support economic growth.



After consultation in the summer with representatives from Ilfracombe's tourism, retail and business communities as well as Ilfracombe Town Council and North Devon Council, Fresh Bread (an independent consultancy group) delivered a new Ilfracombe logo with the strap-line - 'Curious Coastal Charm' which it was felt reflected and reinforced the distinctive essence of Ilfracombe. This new branding quickly attracted country-wide interest ! The branding images are available by contacting the Ilfracombe Centre and on the website.

## Planning

The year has seen an increase in planning applications over the previous year indicating to us that some confidence is returning to the local economy. The updating of the Queens Hotel and the major refurbishment of the Britannia Hotel are just two examples which demonstrate that confidence is returning. The Bus Station site is still awaiting development. The planning application for this site met with stiff opposition from locals when they attended our public meeting which was specifically arranged to allow members of the public to have their say. After issues raised by the Conservation and Heritage Officer, the application was withdrawn. We await these conservation concerns to be addressed with hopefully a revised application to follow.

The Town Council are responding to the public concerns relating to what appear to be 'stalled' planning applications around the town. These include the Berkeley Hotel, the site of the old amusement arcade next to Runnymede Gardens, the Montebello site and the Collingwood. As, a Council, we are attempting to act as a catalyst to unlock these sites by bringing owners, developers and the planning authority into discussions. In addition to making recommendation on planning applications, and providing input to the Town Council's response to the Northern Devon Core strategy, the planning committee has also provided input to the Conservation area boundary consultation. This is an important document for the town, as we need to ensure the correct balance is achieved for preserving our landscape and 'green areas' whilst being flexible enough so as not to restrict economic development.

## Regeneration

The Ilfracombe Regeneration Board meets to drive through the large projects being undertaken in Ilfracombe. Projects underway relate to the harbour, the seafront, major development sites and Fore Street.

Projects likely to be completed in the near future are; new signage in car parks around the harbour and Broad Street and a new look for Fore Street including an archway leading down from the High Street.

The idea of a Land train operating a park and ride scheme has been in circulation for a long time, but with the support of the JDT the idea has been investigated in great depth. The need to support the new Ferry service has been the motivating force. After much debate the majority view was that we need detailed market research before we could invest in the project. Fortunately for the town it seems likely that an independent operator may be interested in running the service and we are now working to support this venture.

The Ferry, whilst not a Town Council initiative is well supported by the Council. The external operator has completed purchase of the two catamaran vessels and we hope to see the external trials which are underway (June 2010), lead to the service being up and running in the near future.

## **Community**

The success of the results emanating from the Litter Meetings held last year has meant an increase in membership, where local people from the community convene with town and district council representatives to discuss litter related topics. As a result there is a direct route for issues to be highlighted to the teams who manage litter and waste recycling services.

Initiatives that have resulted from these meetings are the Voluntary Dog Warden project which is being trialled with the support of the Town Council: It is hoped that these extra 'eyes and ears' on the street will prove to be a visible deterrent to those who continue to allow their dogs to foul public places; and a trial of Gull Guards, a device to try to eliminate the mess caused by gulls attacking rubbish awaiting collection.

In a joint working initiative the Town Council have taken over the public conveniences located in the village of Lee after they were due for certain closure. The District Council have supplied funding for some refurbishment which was completed last year, and now with members of the local community providing the cleaning and the Town Council providing service maintenance, the toilets are open for use by the many walkers and visitors to the area.

The Vision Community Centre in the Slade valley continues its revival. The Town Council is the trustee of this Charity and with splendid help from Transform and the community has enabled it to continue running. It provides a centre for the local Surestart toddlers association to hold their morning play morning sessions, and is flexible enough to cater for local sports groups including the Boxing and Aikido groups.

Via its popular 'Small Grants' process, eligible community organisations can apply to the Town Council for funding of up to £500. Examples of some of the instances of successful applicants for this year include, the Town Council supporting the local swimming club to purchase new lane-lines, the table tennis club to buy new sports equipment, provision of safety and outdoor clothing for the Lantern Pre-school toddlers and funds made available to the Community Resources Group to purchase a beehive and beekeeping equipment enabling their volunteers with learning disabilities to gather knowledge on environmental issues. The 'Major Grants' process gives the ability for organisations to bid for funding which forms part of the Council's precept setting process. Those whom have benefited this year include the Tourist Information Centre, the Ilfracombe & District Transport Association and Ilfracombe in Bloom.

This year saw the Town Council champion the 'Keep Chivenor 24 Hours Campaign', which we know from feedback received is a passionate cause supported by many in our community. The new Mayor for 2010/11 Councillor Thompson is at the forefront of organising petitions and meeting with key contacts, whom we hope will agree that the Search and Rescues service should be operational on a 24 hour basis from the Chivenor base.

## **The Ilfracombe Centre**

2009/10 was the second year of operation for the Ilfracombe Centre, which had an unprecedented usage of 25,000 (nearly twice the population of Ilfracombe) visiting this year. Facilities that can be accessed from the Centre include all of the web and telephone services offered by the District and County Councils including a new link directly through to the Devon Home Choice scheme. However it is the face to face services that are available to all that make this an important and vital part of the community.

North Devon Council offer contact to services provided by Environmental Health, Benefits, Planning, Parking, Waste and Recycling. The Housing Options Officer is available via daily surgeries.

Due to demand, the Citizens Advice Bureau has increased their booking from 2 to 3 days per week. North Devon Pathfinder Trust continues to provide numeracy, literacy and IT courses. Dependency related support groups also operate out of the Centre providing one to one counselling sessions.

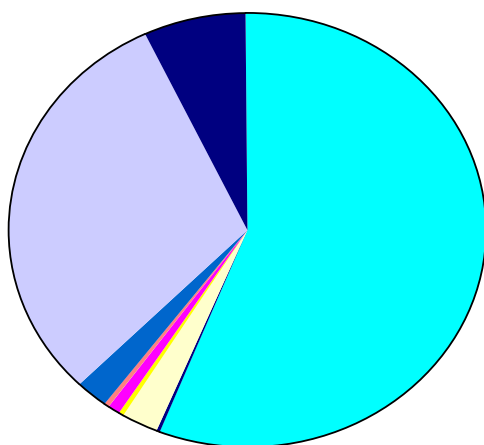
The main police telephone enquiry line is available from the Centre, and local police teams provide a regular surgery for people to speak to an officer.

All Town Council meetings including planning and committee meetings are held at the Centre which members of the public are welcome to attend. Town Councillors may be contacted through the Centre and the member of Parliament for North Devon holds regular surgeries form here.

**Financials** - The Councils' Precept (budget) for the financial year 2009/10 was £ 124,461. 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 £1,600, however the proportion of this as paid to Ilfracombe Town Council is approximately £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.

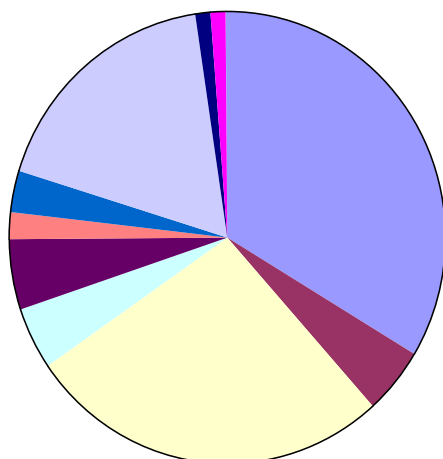
Year on year income totals have seen an increase (with the exclusion of capital funding now that the building refurbishment project has finished); notably within the Ilfracombe Centre budget which has seen both its room booking and rental levels increase as more and more people use it to host many and varied functions. Regeneration will feature strongly in future budgets to accommodate plans and initiatives within the town.

**Ilfracombe Town Council summary of Income for year  
31 March 2010 - £227,181**



- Precept & Grants - £126,861
- Misc - £370
- NDC grant for Lee Toilets - £6,196
- Ebberly House parking - £480
- Contribution to Xmas Lights - £2,000
- Insurance Claim - £668
- The Ilfracombe Centre room hire income - £4,536
- The Ilfracombe Centre rentals - £70,070
- Onestop recovery - £16,000

**Ilfracombe Town Council total expenditure for year  
ending 31 March 2010 £182,682**



- Ilfracombe Centre - £61,297
- Maintenance contracts - £8,837
- Grants & expenditure in community - £49,333
- Council Tax - £7,930
- Utility bills/Telephone - £9,010
- Regeneration - £3,878
- insurance - £5,316
- Subscriptions, Legal, Civic & Administration - £32,862
- Training - £2,131
- Audit - £2,088

**Communication** - Those wishing to make an appointment to meet their Town Councillors, can do so at the Ilfracombe Centre – 01271 855300 or via [theilfracombecentre@northdevon.co.uk](mailto: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](http://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).**

First Name	Surname	Tele contact	Email contact	Ward
Margaret	Blundell	01271 862647	<a href="mailto:margaretblundell@talktalk.net">margaretblundell@talktalk.net</a>	Central
Wendy	Butler	01271 867836	<a href="mailto:rupertswood@talktalk.net">rupertswood@talktalk.net</a>	Central
Leo	Cooper	01271 864863	<a href="mailto:leo@region39.com">leo@region39.com</a>	West
Lynda	Courtnadge	01271 864414	<a href="mailto:westaway@tiscali.co.uk">westaway@tiscali.co.uk</a>	Central
Paul	Crabb	01271 864299	<a href="mailto:paul@crabbcontractors.com">paul@crabbcontractors.com</a>	East
Rod	Donovan	01271 862200	<a href="mailto:rod.donovan@leisureshopdirect.com">rod.donovan@leisureshopdirect.com</a>	West
Janice	Donovan	01271 862200	<a href="mailto:janice.donovan@leisureshopdirect.com">janice.donovan@leisureshopdirect.com</a>	West
Michael	Dymond	01271 864346	<a href="mailto:elizabeth@edymond.wanadoo.co.uk">elizabeth@edymond.wanadoo.co.uk</a>	East
Mike	Edmunds	01271 866169	<a href="mailto:mike.edmunds@northdevon.gov.uk">mike.edmunds@northdevon.gov.uk</a>	East
Geoff	Fowler	01271 864211	<a href="mailto:geoff.fowler@devon.gov.uk">geoff.fowler@devon.gov.uk</a>	West
Albert	Furber	01271 863035	<a href="mailto:a.furber31@btinternet.com">a.furber31@btinternet.com</a>	Central
Nancy	Green	01271 863926	<a href="mailto:scribes.r2r@btinternet.com">scribes.r2r@btinternet.com</a>	Central
Robin	Horne	01271 866460	<a href="mailto:robin@capstoneholidays.co.uk">robin@capstoneholidays.co.uk</a>	West
Ron	Ley	01271 870629	<a href="mailto:ron@ronley.com">ron@ronley.com</a>	West
Frank	Pearson	01271 866057	<a href="mailto:pearsonfrank@googlemail.com">pearsonfrank@googlemail.com</a>	Central
John	Swan	01271 864679	<a href="mailto:john-swan@tiscali.co.uk">john-swan@tiscali.co.uk</a>	Central
Bob	Thompson	01271 864535	<a href="mailto:robertthompson09@aol.com">robertthompson09@aol.com</a>	East
Philip	Webb	01271 879233	<a href="mailto:philipwebb01@gmail.com">philipwebb01@gmail.com</a>	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](mailto:itc@northdevon.gov.uk)

[theilfracombecentre@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:theilfracombecentre@northdevon.gov.uk)