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AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2012

A Message From The Mayor



Mayor Of Northam Cllr Mrs J Whittaker

It's almost six months since I became the Mayor. Of course, I realised at the time that it was a great compliment to be asked and that it would require a real commitment in terms of time and energy. I also knew that there would be many different aspects to the role, but just how many there have been has amazed me.

The invitations to be part of different aspects of community life arrive on an almost weekly basis and each one brings a greater understanding of what's going on locally, what they mean to local people's lives. It's certainly given me a far better understanding of just how significant our local Shipyard is, and of how many people commit their time and courage to the local Lifeboat Station or to the local Fire Service. It's provided me with a chance to work with and be part of St. Margaret's Church congregation, whether that has been in the Churchyard itself or

as part of their Patronal celebration. I have also come to realise that far more people than I ever imagined do things on a voluntary basis and in ways I'd never thought of. Two such examples regularly bring music into many local lives. These are the Appledore Band of which I am now a great fan and the many folk who sing for pleasure, but who do so with the added value of raising money for good causes as well.

Another aspect of the Mayor's role is to raise funds for something worthwhile, particularly something that could benefit many local people. I hope to do just that, starting on the 2nd of December with a Charity Sunday Lunch at the Golf Club. I want to support those in our community who have some form of Dementia and their family members who care for them. It is a cause very dear to my heart as I, along with the rest of my family, have a personal experience here.

Burrough Farm

The National Trust has kindly supplied and installed a gate which will allow public access to Burrough Farm from the footpath that runs between Windmill Lane and Goats Hill. This followed a decision made by Northam Town Council to introduce this improvement. The Council has also established a hard standing adjacent to the Dane Court entrance on Burrough Farm. This, so that Allotment Holders can park for short periods while they unload items required for their individual plots. Hopefully this has removed the need for people accessing their allotments to park and unload on the highway close to Burrough Farm.

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A New Councillor And Forthcoming Election

Mr Kenny Davis was elected as a Councillor for the Northam Ward following an election arising from the resignation of Cllr Mrs Maria Bailey.

Another vacancy has subsequently arisen with the resignation of Cllr Richard Osborne. Mr Osborne has moved from the area to begin a new life in Cornwall, taking the good wishes of his colleagues on the Council with him. An election has been called to fill this vacancy and will take place on the 13th December.



New Councillor Mr K Davis

Northam Square Survey

The results of this Survey, the questionnaire for which was included in the Summer Newsletter, have now been collated. 102 replies were received, the main points raised were;

- 80% of people agreed there is a traffic problem in The Square
- 69% of people think there is too much traffic going through The Square
- 67% of people would like to see a pedestrian crossing in The Square

The full results can be viewed on the News page on the Northam Town Council website. www.northamtc.co.uk

Appledore Boat Park

The Boat Park on the Quay has now been cleared by order of the County Council. This has been done so that a number of spaces can be set out which will clearly show storage arrangements for the future. Northam Town Council are currently discussing taking over the running of the Boat Park from the County Council.

Bringing Lords Meadow Play Area Back To Life



Cllr Himan and PCSO Andy Elston attend the consultation event

In the past few years this Play Area had become more run down and less attractive to local children and their parents. However, all this will change in the near future. Through a combination of financial support from Torridge District Council, something your Northam District Councillors worked hard to secure, and with funding from the Planning gain of a local development there is now enough money to restore it properly. However, everyone agreed that the views and wishes of local children and their parents must be sought before the new Play equipment was ordered. The 'Transform Programme' based in N. Devon District but now working in Torridge as well, offered to help and organised a Consultation event on the 6th October. TDC, The Police, Tarka Housing, Snapdragons Day Nursery and local residents all took part. It was very well attended with 35 adults and 50 children and young people completing a form that described their preferred equipment.

As TDC owns Lords Meadow this information is now back with its Officers who will organise the purchases and bring the restoration of the Play Area to a successful completion.

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Aldermen

The Council decided to bestow the honour of Alderman on two past Councillors who they considered had, during the time they served as Town Councillors, made a significant contribution to both the Council and the local Community as a whole. At Ceremonies held on the 11th and 18th of October Mr Keith Evers and Mr Richard Bradford, MBE were presented with specially created Certificates to mark the occasion and their names are now inscribed on a newly established Aldermen's Honours Board in the Council Chamber.

Bone Hill Car Park

As many local residents will now have realised this Car Park now provides **free** parking and is being well used. The Council have however decided that they need to introduce a registration system for long term use. So, anyone wishing to use the Car park on a regular basis for more than 6 hours per day will have to register their intention to do so at the Council Offices. A modest annual registration charge will be made of £10 as a register of vehicles has to be developed, maintained and passes organised. The rationale behind this decision is that when required long term users may need to be asked to keep an area of the Car park clear for a particular event. This could be for a Car Boot Sale, a Community Celebration or even for Produce or Craft Markets.

December Full Council & Planning Meetings

The December Full Council and Planning Committee meetings have been moved to Wednesday 19th December at 6pm and 7pm.

Newsflash

A Police surgery will be held on November 29th at the Council Offices between 12.30PM and 2PM. Dates and times for surgeries in 2013 will be published online shortly.

2012 Christmas Carol Concert

Northam Town Council welcomes you to our annual Carols around the Tree at St Margaret's Church on 15th December at 4pm.



Congratulations

Northam Town Council would like to pass on their congratulations to Snapdragons Pre-School who have now raised the entire amount they require to proceed with their new building. A big well done to all of the committee for their continued hard work.



Cllr Jane Whittaker presents Mr Evers with his Alderman Award in front of the new honours board.



Mr R Bradford MBE receives his award from the Mayor.

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Annual Report of Northam Town Council 11-12

To include the Income and Expenditure Account to 31st March 2012 and Annual Reports from the Annual Town Council Meeting in May 2012 from the then Mayor and Committee Chairmen.

Income & Expenditure Account 01/04/2011 to 31/03/2012

Income

Administration	£2,117.55
Northam Hall	£17,222.82
Mayor/Members	£311.02
Allotments Windmill Lane	£438.50
Precept	£131,650.00
Northam Burrows	£17,235.15
Town Projects	£2,275.83
Burrough Farm	£100.00
Seagate	£2,720.00
Restated	<u>-£1,524.22</u>
	£172,546.65

Expenditure

Administration	£65,316.62
S137	£6,550.00
Northam Hall	£22,985.08
Mayor/Members	£2,854.00
Town Projects	£17,753.98
Seagate	£7,534.67
Burrough Farm	£15,908.36
Northam Burrows	£9,260.59
Grants Other	£1,200.00
Elections	£2,601.06
War Memorials	£20.82
Allotments Windmill Lane	£65.00
Tourism	£2,324.55
Restated	<u>-£1,291.00</u>
	£153,083.73

General Fund

Balance at 01 Apr 2011	£111,684.02
ADD Total Income	£172,546.65
	£284,230.67
DEDUCT Total Expenditure	£153,083.73
	£131,146.94
Transfer to/from Reserves	<u>£0.00</u>
Balance at 31 Mar 2012	£131,146.94

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11-12 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning Committee

I consider it a privilege and honour to have been appointed Chairman of this Council's Planning Committee at the first meeting of the Committee after the Town Council Elections last May. There was as well additional responsibility as there were members on this committee for the first time. One of the first issues that presented itself was the Richmond Dock Appeal held in June to hear whether there should be development on the Grade II* Listed Structure surrounded by the designated Conservation Area. After 3 days of intensive reasoning put forward by both the appellants, Simon Maunder and the defence, Torrridge District Council, the Inspector, Olivia Spencer came down on the side of Torrridge District Council and refused the Appeal to develop the site.

It was not all high octane however, and comparatively low key planning applications were regularly considered. By comparing our recommendations with the final decisions of Torrridge District Council, we seemed to be coming to most conclusions in line with them. We are in uncharted waters as far as Planning and related matters are concerned, as the Localism Act came into force within the last twelve months and it should be quite reasonable to realise that there are many changes still to come into force which could give more powers to councils such as Northam Town Council.

There is still one major application before Torrridge District Council that this Council has again had before us. On Monday 26th March in the Chamber, a special Planning Meeting was held to consider the proposed development of Land at Knapp House comprising a Marina, Hotel, a Care Village and 295 dwellings. The meeting was very well attended with approximately 250 members of the public in attendance, not counting those unable to get into a "standing room only" meeting. This Council once again recommended unanimously that the Planning Authority refuse permission for this application to be given.

We are in very exciting times as far as planning matters are concerned, especially with the passing of the Localism Act earlier this year. The Local Development Framework is in the process of being put together. What is important is that this must be drawn up with great care of detail as it will provide the blue print for future decisions within the Northam Town Council boundary. The Neighbourhood Plan (spatial document) is one aspect of the Localism Act which empowers local bodies to become more involved in the future planning of their areas. A Seminar was held on 14th March which was attended by the Town Clerk and myself. This was presented by Planning Aid which provides free independent and impartial advice on town planning matters to community groups and individuals throughout the south west who cannot afford to pay for a professional advisor. The service is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I would seriously urge local Residents' Associations as well as this Council to draw upon the services provided by this body while drawing up our Local Development Framework. Planning Chairman, Cllr Osborne.

Human Resources Committee

Cllr Mrs Whittaker who was elected to Chair this Committee was pleased to comment on its usefulness, even though it has only been established during the past year. During its early meetings there were several challenges to face as there had been some new staff appointments to consider. Most of the Councillors had agreed wholeheartedly that as staff numbers increased it was necessary to form a Committee that could provide HR support, not only for the Town Clerk but for the Council as a whole. Its role has only just begun, but Cllr Whittaker was sure it would be a positive force for good, especially considering the responsibilities that all employers have to take account of these days.

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11-12 COMMITTEE REPORTS CONT.

Finance Committee

Cllr Edwards advised that this would be the last time he would be giving a report as Chairman of Finance. He feels it is time for someone else to take up the reins. He thanked everyone on the Committee for their hard work and thanked the Town Clerk for all the work she had done on finance. Most matters had been covered by the Mayor's report. He was pleased to say that there were larger balances than anticipated at the end of the last financial year. The new precept had been set and raised slightly, for example a band D property has increased by £5 per year. He asked that the percentage increase be ignored as it appears large due to starting from a small base. He felt that the Council was providing good service to the community from the funds available. He thanked everyone for their help and wished good luck to his successor.

Town Projects Committee

Cllr Miller advised that most matters had been covered by the retiring Mayor in his report; in addition we have installed grit bins and are now storing plenty of salt. There is on-going work on the installation of dog and litter bins and we hope matters will progress now following purchase of the new vehicle.

Northam Burrows Committee

Cllr Miller was pleased to announce that Northam Burrows was now run financially with separate accounts. The new temporary assistant has worked hard to issue over 1,000 passes. Many concerns have been expressed about sheep worrying and it is hoped to appoint a temporary warden. We are now waiting for agreement by full Council. This appointment would be a good public relations exercise. North Devon+ are still dealing with the Business Plan.

11-12 MAYOR'S REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR HAMES

I was honoured to be elected Mayor by my fellow Councillors last May to represent this Council in the Community and to represent the Community and the Council in the wider world. In this role my partner Veronica and I have greatly enjoyed meeting people at various functions throughout the year, and exchanging views and information with other Mayors, Councillors and citizens.

We have also enjoyed immensely the colourful world of local tradition, for example, the South Molton Old English Fayre, Holsworthy St Peter's Fair and Torrington May Fair and we have enjoyed some nice meals and glasses of wine in pleasant company.

However, the Mayor's life is not all to do with eating and drinking. Mostly it involves chairing meetings at Council and attending committee meetings as ex officio member, and it is at these gatherings that other aspects of the Mayor's responsibilities come in to play. Apart from contributing to the debates I have tried to maintain direction and purpose in the workings and projects of the Council, never forgetting that the Town Council exists to get things done for the Community.

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11-12 MAYOR'S REPORT FROM COUNCILOR HAMES CONT.

During my term I am proud to say that the co-operation and teamwork that exists amongst Councillors has continued with good effect. Northam Hall, owned by the Council, has been upgraded and is well used, while at Burrough Farm, also owned by the Council, the allotments are flourishing and we have now extended the allotment area to meet continued demand. We have also instigated a programme of improvements to the rest of the site, having recently planted 200 trees, and we plan to create wild flower areas. We also plan to improve access to the site by making a gate through from the adjacent footpath which runs from Windmill Lane to Goats Hill and by creating a drop off area at the Dane Court end of the site.

Having taken the decision to apply to Torrington District Council to run Northam Burrows we as a Council are now discussing our Business Plan with that authority and I hope that under my successor this project will come to fruition. We have also recently agreed with Torrington a lease to run Bone Hill Car Park in Northam, where car parking is now free! This is part of the Council's plan to increase usage of the car park in order to relieve pressure of traffic on Northam Square, and a survey we shall circulate soon will gather the community's ideas on other ways in which this pressure can be alleviated. The Council also plans to use Bone Hill for regular farmers' markets and other events.

We also have other fingers in other pies – Seagate Car Park in Appledore, for example, flourishes under our ownership and we are investigating taking over the running of Appledore Boat Park on the Quay. We have also continually encouraged through funding and other support the improvements carried out by volunteers at Anchor Park and the Skateboard Park in Appledore, while through our grants we have supported many other community groups.

None of this work could have happened without you, my Deputy Mayor and other fellow Councillors, who give your time, enthusiasm and expertise for the good of the Community, or without the stalwart staff in the Office. They make sure that the decisions of the Council are carried out and that everything runs smoothly, so I would like to thank the Town Clerk, Jane Mills, the Assistant Town Clerk, Pat Moores, our recent recruit, Alice Kendall and our Maintenance men, Will Gysin and Julian Avery who do such good work out and about in the Parish collecting litter, tending to flower beds, doing running repairs and other jobs. It is my hope that now the Council has decided to purchase a pick-up vehicle these two men can more effectively include in their work the recycling of items gathered on their litter picks and the composting of organic material arising from weeding and other activities.

Finally, I would like to express my huge gratitude to my partner Veronica for all her work and the support she has given me in her role as Mayoress - I couldn't have done the job without her - and I thank the good citizens of the diverse Parish of Northam for their support, feedback and encouragement and for all the good work which many of them do voluntarily in the community. Let us all look forward together to building on this community spirit in the coming years.

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Councillor List

Appledore Ward

Cllr Mrs A Boyle	471199
Cllr A Eastman	474550
Cllr B M Edwards	477441
Cllr P Hames	421065

Northam Ward

Cllr C Ballard	477082
Cllr K Davis	472136
Cllr J Himan	422227
Cllr R J Johnson	475408
Cllr R W A Miller	474658
Cllr Mrs J Whittaker	472315

Orchard Hill

Cllr Mrs P D Biggs 476485 or 473103

Westward Ho!

Cllr B Mason	424109
Cllr R M M Tisdale	474703

Who Does What?

Northam Town Council

The Town Council is responsible for; allotments, some bus shelters, Northam Hall, grants, litter picking and the upkeep of the war memorials to name but a few.

Torridge District Council

The responsibilities of the District Council include local planning, housing, refuse collection, sports and leisure facilities, parks and open spaces and street cleaning. Collection of fly tipping from public land such as highways. Council tax, elections and some licensing.

Devon County Council

Devon County Council's responsibilities cover amongst other areas, schools, social care for the elderly and vulnerable, road maintenance including street lighting, libraries and trading standards.

Town Council Officers & Staff

Town Clerk	Mrs M J Mills MILCM
Assistant Town Clerk	Mrs Pat Moores
Admin Assistant	Miss Alice Kendall
Maintenance Man	Will Gysin
Commons Warden	Rachel Summers



Seasons Greetings From Northam Town Council