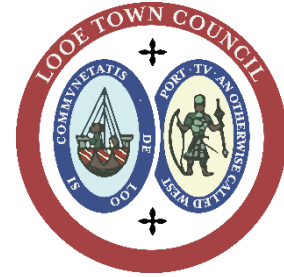


# **LOOE TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Annual Report 2021/2022**

### **MAYOR'S REPORT MAY 2022**



When I became Mayor in 2019 I mentioned that we were probably going to see the biggest change within the council since the local government reorganisation in 1974, which despite the pandemic we are well on our way to achieving.

Over the last 3 years there have been big changes within the council. In order to move our council forward and be in the best position to support and grow our community as well as taking on those services that Cornwall Council will no longer be providing, we totally restructured the Council, first of all employing a new strategic director and town Clerk, Mel Colton-Dyer. My special thanks goes to Mel who more than hit the ground running and enabled Looe to lead the way in Cornwall and it was unfortunately inevitable that she would be head hunted and left us in March this year. I would like to say a big thank you to Kate Puckey for stepping up magnificently to help us through until our new Clerk started. Not only has our staff changed, but we had 9 new councillors start in the last 2 years and have now just gone through another election process. Our new Councillors bring a wealth of different skills and experience but one thing they all have in common is a love and passion for Looe and a desire to work hard to make a positive difference to the town and for its residents. They arrived at the Council at a challenging time, but also at an exciting time with the Council working on delivering a number of key projects. Again, I would like to thank every one of them for the incredible work they have done for the council and the skills that they have brought.

We have recently set our vision and mission for the council and have set our priorities for the coming years, which is an extremely important piece of work that will ensure we are able to delivery these priorities efficiently and to ensure our town continues to deliver and improve. One of our key priorities to relieve the burden on our local tax payers whilst still delivering the projects and priorities is to increase our income through realising our assets and obtaining external funding where possible as well as improving efficiencies. Further as part of our devolution ask of Cornwall Council is to take over the Riverside carpark, which will give us some additional income. As part of this, you may have now noticed that the charging for using the Millpool toilets is now operational. We took this difficult decision to offset the costs of running the toilets and to be able to improve the facilities. However, I only supported this if we could have free entry to for residents. By using the latest technology, we have contactless payment which has enabled us to have residents' cards. Details of how to obtain a card will be published soon.

As you will be aware a very significant piece of work has just passed a major milestone, that being the acceptance of the Looe neighbourhood development plan through the recent referendum. This now leads onto the next phase of the delivery of the plan.

As part of our transformation and desire to reach as many of our community as possible we launched the new Looe Town Council website, where we welcome any community news or updates. Community groups can also have a page on the website. This website is also much easier to navigate and allows us to be more transparent as all are minutes and decisions etc are easy to find.

When we made the decision to close the tourist information centre (prior to 2019), we made the decision to upgrade our destination website to enable us to continue to provide quality visitor information but in a more modern way as the way visitors access information has been changing for a number of years with more information and transactions happening online. As part of this we also rebranded 'visit Looe', however, unfortunately due to the pandemic our launch was delayed until May last year and there is still work to be done to make this a leading destination website.

We are continuing to help set up a town team. This will drive the town revitalisation which is so essential at this current time. It is aimed at Social, economic and environmental prosperity. It requires the Town bodies to work together which includes business, third sector/charities, Youth/schools etc., which also helps attract funding for the town

Although it has been such an incredibly difficult and challenging time during the pandemic in so many different ways, from great sorry for our loses, to the incredible way our community once again came together to help each other.

I have been so proud of our community in so many ways and cannot thank everyone enough.

In such a short time we became one of the best organised volunteering networks in Cornwall with over 150 volunteers helping our local community. Looe's response was so incredible that we became recognised as leading the way for others and lessons learnt here helped and supported many other communities across Cornwall.

I would like to give a special thank you to the small group of volunteers who coordinated our volunteer response.

The Community cupboard, which is still running, is again a community collaboration and I would like to thank everyone that helped set it up and still are making donations.

Our library was the only one in Cornwall to maintain a service during full lockdown, operating a click and deliver service, again dependent on volunteers delivery the books.

My sincere thanks go to the Old Bridge Surgery, Looe Development Trust and Looe Lions for their hard work in organising the Millpool centre as a vaccination centre for the Town.

I have been incredibly proud to have been mayor of such a wonderful community and chairman of a council that is putting Looe at the heart of what it does now and planning for the future.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of LTC staff for their dedication and hard work. The work you do is essential to the town and is really appreciated. I would also like to thank my deputy Edwina Hannaford and Committee Chairman for all they do.

**Councillor Martin Gregory**

**Mayor of Looe**