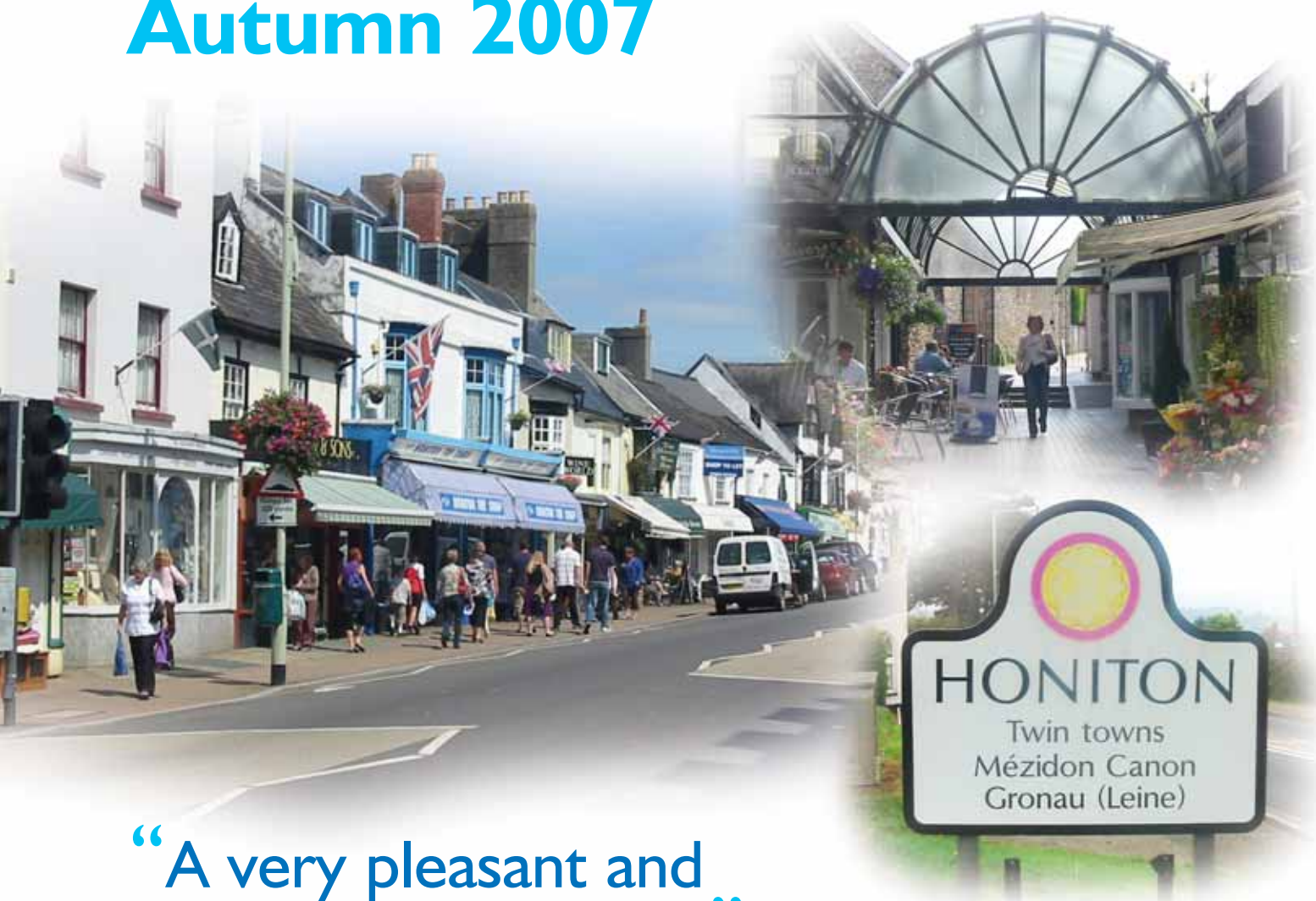




Honiton Neighbourhood Assessment Autumn 2007



“A very pleasant and friendly market town”

Around 350 homes were visited in total by Environmental Health staff and Honiton Police Community Support Officers during a recent Neighbourhood Assessment. Many people were interviewed and a public open day was held at the Mackarness Hall where all residents of Honiton were invited to call in to express their concerns.

Over 95% of the people interviewed said they were happy living in Honiton and thought it was an enjoyable place to live.

A third of all residents spoken to said they had no complaints or concerns at all.

Working together with results

Working in partnership, the PCSOs and Environmental Health staff were able to obtain valuable community information.

Several complaints were received about drug dealing in areas of Honiton. One particular address was highlighted and Honiton Police subsequently carried out a warrant, as a result the occupier has now been sent to prison for ten months.



So what other concerns did Honiton residents have?

Noise

A number of people reported being disturbed by late night music and noise from pubs and clubs. There were several complaints about noise from the Top Bar at the Carlton Inn and this is being investigated by Environmental Health Officers. The Carlton Inn have now started closing their beer garden at midnight to reduce noise. Other premises complained about were The Pitt Club, The Three Tuns and The Railway Inn. All complaints have been passed to Environmental Health Officers to monitor and investigate. They will also be discussing any problems with the Council's Licensing Officers if complaints persist. Some people thought noise outside the pubs and in the streets had increased since the smoking



ban was introduced as many people now gather outside entrances to smoke.

There were also several complaints about noise from barking dogs, a knocking flag pole rope and a noisy air conditioning unit. All these will be logged to be investigated by Environmental Health Officers.

Parking issues

Parking in Honiton is a concern to many residents. Some residents in the Clapper Lane area said they were very concerned about the danger of the cars parking near Honiton Primary School when children are dropped off and collected. Others said they were angered by people parking in designated disabled spaces and they asked that the Police and car park attendants take stronger action against this.



A few people who lived close to the town centre asked for residents' permits. Devon County Council have said they currently have no plans to provide residents' permits but if they did in the future they would prioritise roads with no off road parking and discuss the matter first with the town council, police and the County Councillors. A list of areas of concern has been passed to Honiton Police and EDDC's car park attendants. The Police say they deal with parking as a matter of priority if there is an immediate danger or obstruction and at other times when staff are available.

Dog fouling

There were many complaints of dog fouling although most people thought this was no longer a problem in the town centre. Langford

Road, Clapper Alley and Pale Gate Close were said to be areas where there was a lot of fouling. Com-

plaints were also received about the mess in Pottery Close, Elm Terrace, Ashley



Road and the Gissage. The dog wardens have been asked to step up their pat-

rols in these areas and will be issuing fixed penalty fines to anyone they witness who allows their dogs to foul the areas. If you wish to make a complaint about dog fouling please call the dog wardens on **08450 6010211**.



Litter

There were several concerns about the amount of discarded litter. Some people said the town centre had an ongoing problem, especially after market days and asked for the streets to be cleaned more often. Streetscene are reviewing the number of cleaners they have working in Honiton and asked market traders to take home their litter at the end of the day.



Allhallows playing field was reported as having constant litter left under benches and blowing around the park.

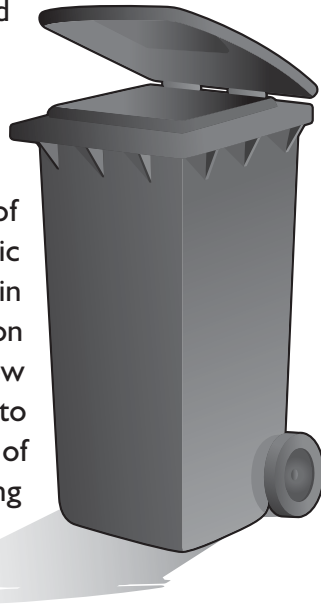
Some residents asked for the chewing gum to be removed from the streets in the town centre, this seems to be a particular problem in the Lace Walk area and outside some pubs. However, the cost of specialist equip-



ment to remove chewing gum is high. All areas of complaint have been handed to Streetscene who work hard to ensure our towns are kept free from litter. The Council are considering issuing fixed penalty tickets for litter in the future.

Recycling

Many people expressed a wish to have their recycling collected weekly and to include plastics and cardboard. Weekly collections of recycling including plastic bottles is due to begin in the Axminster / Seaton areas early in the new year. This is then set to roll out across the rest of the district including Honiton. It is hoped cardboard will be included in the recycling schemes in the future too. There were also a few concerns over rubbish collections at certain addresses and these areas have been passed on to be investigated.



The Honiton neighbourhood police team which consists of 1 Sergeant, 3 Constables and 5 PCSOs are responsible for Honiton and the 23 surrounding villages. Honiton police have recently carried out a series of 'Safe Nights out' operations involving a dozen officers between 1700 – 0300 hrs, targeting problem areas and they say they significantly reduced crime. Cctv is now operating in several locations across the town and the Police are hoping this will be extended in the future. The Police say Honiton remains an extremely safe place to live and its crime figures are low.

Empty shops

A few people were concerned about the number of empty shops in the High Street. There is currently a small business rate relief of around 50% reduction on Council Tax for the proprietors of some single businesses.

Police issues

A large number of people requested more visible policing especially at night and asked for more police on the beat. There were complaints about incidents of vandalism, teenage drinking and general anti-social behaviour in the town centre during the evenings. Most people felt this could be best tackled with a higher police presence.



Some residents felt more should be done to encourage new businesses into the town and asked for locals to support existing businesses as much as possible. Several people commented on the improvement to the town due to a number of new independent shops in the last few years.

Derelict site

There was a suggestion from one gentleman that the empty land behind East View Lane could be turned into a public open space and there were several concerns that there are not enough spaces and parks for children to play in around Honiton.



Air quality

A small number of people were concerned about air quality related to traffic and congestion fumes around the Turks Head junction and Dowell Street.



Air quality monitoring equipment is currently installed at eight locations around the Honiton Motel junction and one around the Dowell Street / High Street junction. As a result of their findings, a local air quality management detailed assessment will shortly be released for Honiton.

Blocked gully

The open channel at the corner of Pottery Close and High Street was said to be blocked with tin cans and rubbish. This was passed to Devon County Council's Highways to investigate. They have now issued a works notice to their contractors to have the gully opened and cleared out.



Housing complaints

A few individual complaints were made about the condition of houses in the town and one person was concerned about the condition of the electrics in a rented property. Several people asked for advice about energy efficiency and details of the grants available. There were also some requests for more advice concerning rats. Environmental Health's housing officers



will be contacting the householders for more information and offering advice and help. If you would like any further information on energy efficiency grants for loft insulation or cavity wall insulation etc. please call **01395 571548** and ask to speak to someone from our housing team.

Graffiti

A sign in Jerrard Close had been paint sprayed and there is a missing sign in Pottery Close. Streetscene have ordered a new sign for Pottery Close and the graffiti on the Jerrard Close sign will be cleaned by them shortly.



Weeds and trees

There were also several complaints about weeds around the town on the pavements and gutters. All these were forwarded to Devon County Council's Highways Department.

A spokesman from Highways said the wet weather had interfered with the spraying programme this year as the chemicals they now use must have a 24 hour dry period. They hope this will improve next year.



Some residents in Rosewell Close said they were concerned about the tall trees behind their properties backing onto the A30 and asked if they could be cut back. There have been boughs falling off during high winds, bringing fences down and causing damage. We have passed this request to The Highways Agency who have agreed to speak to the residents and take the matter forward with a view to remedying the problem.

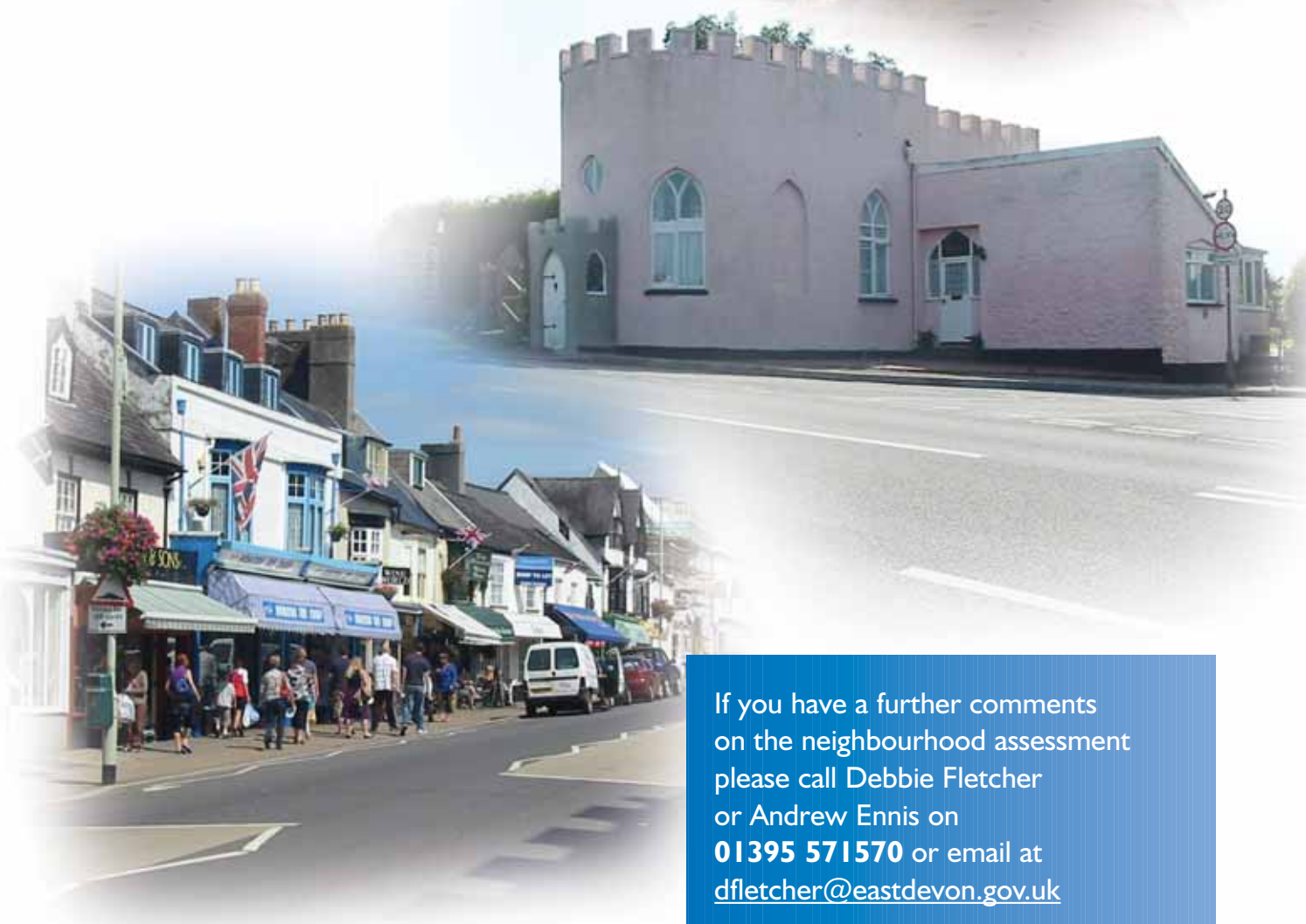
Flooding

Four people said they were concerned about flooding in Dowell Street after heavy rain. Devon County Council were asked to investigate this problem and they found there was a blocked gully which they have now cleared.



Almost everyone who took part in the neighbourhood assessment said they enjoyed living in Honiton and several said it was a very friendly town with good amenities and easy access into Exeter.

Many residents said they felt fortunate to have lived in Honiton for all their lives.



If you have a further comments on the neighbourhood assessment please call Debbie Fletcher or Andrew Ennis on **01395 571570** or email at dfletcher@eastdevon.gov.uk