



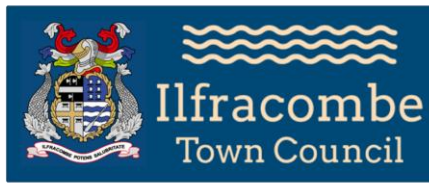
Mayor's Annual Report 2025/2026

Prepared by: Cllr Mark Fay

I am coming to the end of my year as Mayor of Ilfracombe and I must say it has been both a pleasure and an eye opener. Before I became a councillor 5 years ago, I freely admit I knew very little about local government. I had the same misconception as many others, namely: the council is “the council”, town, district and county are all the same thing really... I soon learned that wasn't true. They are three separate entities, with different roles and responsibilities, not to mention different councillors and meeting in different offices. The role of the Town Council is to lobby upwards and try to get things for Ilfracombe out of the bigger pots. My other main misconception was that my £300ish per month council tax that I pay was evenly distributed. Little did I know that the Town Council only got about £7 of that a month. So, if you are wondering what the Town Council achieves with that little slice of the pie, I urge you to look at the ITC Strategic Plan on our website. It's impressive! While you are on the website, look at the roles and responsibilities of district and county councils. It's quite enlightening. Let me summarise it:

Ilfracombe Town Council has two wards (East & West) and 18 members representing these two wards. Ilfracombe Town Council acts as the watchdog to the two other councils whilst also developing local initiatives such as, owning and managing the [Ropery Road car park](#), now the High Street car park, the [Ilfracombe Centre](#), the [Lantern Centre](#), [Luma work hub](#) , the Hele Bay, Brimlands, St James and Lee Bay Public Conveniences in **Ilfracombe** whilst supporting many community associations, activities and volunteers. These services and activities include but are not limited to:

- Important consultee on planning applications
- Local Emergency Planning
- Pride in Ilfracombe Awards
- [Ilfracombe/Ifs French Twinning Association](#)
- Volunteer Car Service
- Local events & marketing



- Strategic plan
 - Funding – local organisations
 - Business and economy – Marketing the town
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Place and Environment

North Devon Council is the District Council for Ilfracombe. They are based in Barnstaple and provide the following services and facilities for Ilfracombe.

- Car parks, charges and fines but not our two.
- Collection of refuse & recyclables, bulky items
- Council Tax & Business Rates
- Electoral Registration
- Housing & homelessness advice
- Parks, recreation grounds, allotments, cemeteries, environmental health, pest control, noise pollution, dog control, public toilets
- Residential and business planning applications
- Building Control
- Street cleaning, litter, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles

Devon County Council is the County Council administering Devon. They are based in Exeter and provide the following services for Ilfracombe.

- Adult learning, services to schools, school libraries, youth services
- Libraries, North Devon record Office, Festivals, The Arts
- Public transport, school transport concessionary fares, community transport, Blue Badges, Parking Permits
- Registration – Births, Deaths & Marriages
- Road maintenance, potholes, traffic management, road safety, gritting, street lighting
- Services for older people, people at risk of harm, people with physical and/or learning disabilities, carers, public health
- Waste disposal including local tips

Every time I go out and about with my chains on, I get asked a quite diverse set of questions, some of which do make me smile I



must admit. I get asked what I am going to do about the boats crossing the channel... What am I doing about the potholes... What am I doing about the abandoned buildings.... Graffiti.... Dog fouling.... Weeds.... Drain clearance... Speeding.... Anti-Social Behaviour in the High Street.... The list is long. In most cases, the issues fall to district or county council. They too are strapped for funds and so things sometimes take a lot longer than the town needs, which is quite frustrating. So as a Town Council, armed with our £7 we try and take up the slack. I'm sure you know that District decided they couldn't afford to maintain public toilets anymore and stated they would all close unless the Town Councils took them over? Well as a seaside town we couldn't let that happen so the Town Council are in the process of taking them over, despite getting no extra money to do so. We clean them, insure them and constantly fix them as they are vandalised. That's why you now pay 50p to pee!

The Town Council is really about constantly lobbying upwards and picking up the slack when nothing happens. So it's all very well me blaming everyone else for a lot of the problems in the town but we as a Town Council felt that we had to take up some more of that slack. To do that we have completely overhauled our facilities department, bolstered it and invested in it. They are now much more nimble and have much more of a "just do it" attitude. That's how we are taking up some of the slack and hopefully you will see the benefits of that in the town's appearance over the coming year. That's what you get for your £7 a month.

Each mayor puts their own slant on the role. For me, I see my year as an ambassador for Ilfracombe. I attend every civic function that I can in North Devon. I go to Barnstaple, Bideford, Great Torrington, Lynton and Lynmouth and, and and.... I tell positive stories about Ilfracombe to whoever will listen. This town has a lot to offer, from its natural beauty to its stunning architecture, to its community spirit. Yes, Ilfracombe has some challenges, but so does everywhere else and often even more so. I'll keep promoting Ilfracombe and I hope you will join me.