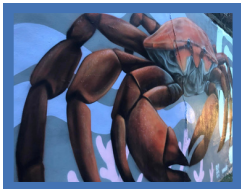


HELLO

Welcome to the Autumn Ilfracombe Town Council (ITC) quarterly newsletter.

A place where you will be able to discover local events, community projects, news and important updates directly from us, your Town Council!

COULD ILFRACOMBE BE THE UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028?!



Earlier this year, Ilfracombe launched its bid to become the UK's first Town of Culture 2028. Led by One Ilfracombe and supported by our incredible creative community, the town was selected as one of just 15 finalists from over 400 applications and the only finalist in the South West.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed ideas, time, passion and support. This achievement belongs to the whole community, and we're incredibly proud of what we've accomplished together.

Special thanks to the core bid team: Charmain Lovett, Laura Elliott, Helen Weedon, Mel Turnbull and John Sellings.

WHAT'S NEXT?...



The next stage of the bid will see a town-wide engagement programme across the next few months. Every household will have a survey posted through their door and our team of volunteers will be at community events to gather your feedback.

Once we have established what our community want to see, we will create and budget for a full Cultural Programme for 2028, with the bid being submitted in November 2026.

The judging panel from DCMS, headed by Sir Phil Redmond, will visit Ilfracombe in the new year and the winners will be announced in March 2027.

To support our bid, please visit www.ilfracombetownofculture.co.uk where you can answer surveys, pledge support and share your ideas.

COUNCIL CATCH-UP



Pictured above: Men's Shed members Alan and Dave

NEW MAYORAL HONOUR BOARD

We recently commissioned Ilfracombe Men's Shed to create a new Mayoral Honours Board to be hung alongside the existing boards in the Council Chambers.

The beautifully finished product was delivered by members Alan and Dave and the craftsmanship really highlights their skills. We look forward to working on future projects with them.

The Ilfracombe Men's Shed have been running for 7 years now and is a fun social space for men to get together, share DIY skills and get involved in many community projects.

If you are interested in joining the waiting list to become a new member please email: ilfracombemensshed@gmail.com

TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW

Councillor Basil and Councillor Turnbull recently met with Emma and Anna from the 'Together for Tomorrow' project to explore ways of supporting local climate action.

Funded by The National Lottery, the 5 yr programme is led by Libraries Unlimited in partnership with Community Action Groups Devon and Resource Futures. The project aims to help communities develop local sustainability initiatives such as repair cafés, clothes swaps and seed swaps, with libraries acting as local sustainability hubs.

The councillors highlighted the fantastic work already happening in Ilfracombe and discussed how this can be strengthened with additional support. A key focus was finding new ways to engage local residents and encourage more people to take part in climate action activities.



Pictured above: Cllr Basil and Cllr Turnbull with Emma and Anna

ILFRACOMBE COMMUNITY AWARDS 2026

Pride in Ilfracombe is now the **Ilfracombe Community Awards!**

Only our name has changed, we'll continue to recognise and acknowledge the amazing people, organisations and businesses that make our town so special.

Every year ITC acknowledges the unsung heroes of heroines Ilfracombe for their acts of kindness, valuable



**2026
NOMINATIONS
NOW OPEN!**

ILFRACOMBE COMMUNITY AWARDS 2026 CONTINUED

contributions to their school or family and those who encourage community development or improve the image of the town via the Ilfracombe Community Awards.

Thank you to everyone who has made a nomination, helping us celebrate the incredible people, businesses and organisations that make our town such a special place to live, work and visit.

SAME GREAT AWARDS – NEW NAME – STRONGER COMMUNITY FOCUS



Pictured above: Various Ilfracombe community members

Winners are to be announced soon and the awards ceremony taking place on **Thursday 15th October 2026**.

With thanks to **The Carlton Hotel** for sponsoring the event.

MOSAIC ARTIST SELECTED FOR ILFRACOMBE CREST RESTORATION

In July ITC started looking for a skilled local mosaic artist to repair our Ilfracombe crest and restore it to its former glory!

Local artists, with mosaic experience, were invited to submit a brief portfolio of their previous work along with a proposal detailing how they would approach the restoration.



Pictured above left to right: Arist Helen Weedon and The Ilfracombe Crest Mosaic

We are delighted to announce that Helen Weedon has been chosen to undertake the restoration.

Helen moved to Ilfracombe in November 2024, having grown up nearby in Berrynarbor, and has been making mosaics for about 10 years. Starting as a hobby, that gradually developed, in 2025 she finally became confident enough to exhibit her work for the first time.

She often finds inspiration in the landscapes & local wildlife of North Devon, amongst other things, and is also collaborating with local ceramicist Fiona Bates on the revival of The Lanes: Home, Ilfracombe’s Historic Mosaic Trail.

Work will start on the restoration of the Ilfracombe Crest later this year and you will be able to follow the progress on Helen’s website: **www.helliemosaics.co.uk**

We were very impressed as always by the talent and creativity within our local artistic

ILFRACOMBE CREST RESTORATION CONTINUED

community and would like to thank everyone who expressed an interest and submitted proposals.

We look forward to seeing this much-loved feature restored to its former splendour and will share updates on the project as work progresses.

To learn more about local artist Helen Weedon a full Q&A can be found at the end of this newsletter.

FREE ENERGY ADVICE DROP-IN SESSIONS



361 Community Energy are hosting free energy advice drop-in sessions each week to help you with your energy concerns or queries. See an advisor between 9am and 11am on **Tuesdays at The Ilfracombe Centre, until 20th October 2026.**

FRIENDS REUNITED



In summer 2024, Ilfracombe Town Council received a letter from Sylvia Kiefer in Germany. She was hoping we could help her find her childhood friend, Monika, who had moved to England many years ago.

Although they had briefly connected some years after the move, Sylvia had lost contact and didn't have any current details. All she knew was that Monika had settled in Ilfracombe. As a last hope, she got in touch with us and we put out an appeal, but sadly no one came forward. We had to let Sylvia know that we hadn't been able to find her friend.



Then, in July this year, we finally received a response. We were thrilled to be able to reconnect Sylvia and Monika after so many years apart, proving that sometimes it's never too late to find an old friend!

Pictured above: Sylvia and Monika in childhood and later when they briefly connected

NEWS FROM NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Bicclescombe Park has once again been recognised with a prestigious Green Flag Award, retaining its status for an impressive 22nd consecutive year!

The announcement comes as the Green Flag Award Scheme, the international quality mark for parks and green spaces, celebrates its 30th anniversary and recognises the hard work, passion and dedication of the teams who care for and maintain these valued spaces for residents and visitors alike. Bicclescombe Park is among an amazing 2,391 sites across the UK to receive the award in 2026.



Pictured above: Bicclescombe Park, Ilfracombe



ILFRACOMBE YOUTH CLUB IS BACK!



After a break for the Summer Ilfracombe Youth Club is finally back from Wednesday 9th September 2026.

Every Wednesday - Youth Club!

2 session each evening:

School Yrs 7/8/9 from 5.30 pm – 7.30pm

Yrs 9+ (up to the age of 18) from 7.30pm – 9pm

The Vision Centre, Slade

Each session is £1 per young person and a tuck shop is also available. There are a number of activities available including gaming, pool table, board games, arts & crafts, football and badminton plus extra events to look out for such as the recent 'Picnic & Music Day' which took place on Friday 28th August in Runnymede Gardens.

For more details about the Youth Club please email: youth@oneilfracombe.org.uk

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT...

ILFRACOMBE COMMUNITY CAR SERVICE



Pictured above: Volunteer and car service user -
photography courtesy of Tim Lamerton Photography

Set up to help anyone needing assistance getting to out-of-town medical appointments, the Ilfracombe Community Car Service can provide a door-to-door travel option to anyone who finds themselves unable to get to medical appointments outside of the Ilfracombe, through our team of volunteer drivers.

You only pay to cover the cost of the volunteer's mileage, and you may be able to claim your expenses back.

There are no age restrictions, this service is available to you if you have:

- No access to suitable transport
- Find it difficult to access public transport

For further information or to book this service:
email: itccarservice@northdevon.gov.uk
Tel: 01271 855300

Ilfracombe Town of Culture 2028 survey postcards will be sent out to all Ilfracombe residents via Royal Mail or you can pick one up from The Ilfracombe Centre, 44 High Street.

If you have you please return it via one of the postboxes listed below...

Postbox Locations



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The Ilfracombe Centre , 44 High Street | 10. Harbour Master , Ilfracombe Harbour |
| 2. The Landmark Theatre , The Promenade | 11. Larkstone Cafe , Larkstone Gardens |
| 3. Hand:Plant , 76 High Street | 12. Arts & Crafts Society , 9-10 The Promenade |
| 4. BANK Creative Space , 151 High Street | 13. Tesco , Ilfracombe |
| 5. Combe Coastal , 18 St. Brannocks Rd | 14. Ilfracombe Library , The Candar |
| 6. Hele Bay Pub , Hele | 15. Fikaboden , 132 High Street |
| 7. Pier Gallery , 10 The Quay | 16. Forty Three Shop , Forestreet |
| 8. Lee Memorial Hall , Lee | 17. 43 Gallery , Fore St |
| 9. Ilfracombe Museum , Wilder Road | 18. Happy Whole Foods , High Street |
| www.IlfracombeTownOfCulture.co.uk | 19. Slade Vision Centre , Slade Valley Road |



Artist Profile Interview Helen Weedon · HellieM Mosaics · Ilfracombe

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I moved to Ilfracombe in November 2024, having grown up nearby in Berrynarbor. I had always wanted to come home, and being closer to my mum and dad was an important part of that decision.

My background is in dance, arts and cultural development, and I now work in creative industries research and investment alongside developing my mosaic practice, HellieM Mosaics. My studio at home is very small, so I call it the Cupboard Studio.

How long have you been a mosaic artist?

I have been making mosaics for about 10 years. It began as a hobby that I really enjoyed and has gradually developed into my own artistic practice.

Although the ideas for HellieM Mosaics had been developing for a while, it was here in Ilfracombe that I felt safe and confident enough to share my work for the first time, during Art Trail 2025.

What first inspired you to become a mosaic artist?

My first teacher was Tracey Baker Stewart at 49a Studio in Swindon. I joined one of her evening classes, learnt some basic techniques and began exploring my own ideas.

Later, I attended a one-day glass mosaic workshop with Debbie Stirling and enjoyed it so much that I joined her evening classes. Both teachers encouraged me to experiment and helped me discover the creative possibilities of mosaic.

How would you describe your usual artistic style?

I think of my work as painting with china. It combines the feeling of a cupboard of curiosities with faded Edwardian glamour and a touch of seaside humour.

I use vintage, preloved and discarded china and costume jewellery to create colourful, characterful mosaics, often featuring birds, animals and coastal creatures. I also hide a tiny ladybird in every piece as my signature.

What themes or subjects inspire your work?

Storytelling is central to my work. I'm fascinated by the history of domestic objects and often wonder who previously owned a cup or plate, whose table it sat on and how many hands have touched it.

Using those fragments in a new artwork allows their story to continue. Nature, gardens, wildlife and the sea provide many of my subjects.

Where do you find inspiration?

I find inspiration in the North Devon landscape, local wildlife, old illustrations and the patterns and colours of vintage china. Sometimes I begin with an idea and look for the right china, but quite often a particular pattern suggests what it wants to become

Is mosaic art difficult to pick up - do you need special skills?

The basic techniques are quite accessible, and you don't need to think of yourself as particularly artistic to begin. A good introductory workshop can give you the confidence to start experimenting.

It takes time to develop control, understand different materials and learn what will work structurally. There is also a surprising amount of problem-solving involved. You need some patience, but breaking china can be very therapeutic!

How does the local area influence your work?

Living in Ilfracombe has brought the sea much more strongly into my work. The birds, fish and other creatures found along the North Devon coast provide endless inspiration, as do the town's architecture, history and slightly quirky character.

Moving home has also made me think more about belonging, local identity and the part art can play in helping people connect with a place.

What other current or future projects are you working on?

Alongside restoring Ilfracombe's town crest, I'm excited to be collaborating with local ceramicist Fee Bates on the revival of The Lanes: Home, Ilfracombe's historic mosaic trail.

We want to rediscover and share the story of the original trail, help restore and care for the surviving artworks, and create new work that responds sensitively to its history. We also hope to involve the community through workshops and opportunities to contribute. It isn't simply about restoring old mosaics - it's about bringing The Lanes back to life and building a renewed sense of local ownership and pride.

I'm also part of the team developing Ilfracombe's bid to become the UK Town of Culture, with a particular role in shaping the cultural programme. It's an exciting opportunity to celebrate the creativity already here, bring different people and organisations together, and explore what culture could do for the town's future.

Alongside these public projects, I continue to work on individual commissions and develop new collections for HellieM Mosaics.

Is there a dream project you'd love to create one day?

I would love to create a large-scale public artwork for Ilfracombe that brings together mosaic, ceramics, local stories and community participation. My background is in arts and cultural

development, so I'm interested not only in making the finished artwork but also in creating opportunities for people to contribute, learn and feel that it belongs to them.

What advice would you give to aspiring artists?

Start before you feel completely ready and allow yourself to experiment. You learn by making, including from the pieces that don't quite work. Every piece is different; every piece is an experiment and an opportunity to learn.

Classes and workshops are a wonderful way to learn the basics, but eventually you need to follow your own curiosity and discover what makes your work recognisably yours. Most importantly, don't compare your beginning with someone else's middle.

If you could collaborate with any artist, living or historical, who would it be?

I think William Morris would be fascinating to work with because of his use of pattern, his inspiration from nature and his belief that art and beauty should be part of everyday life.

I would be interested to see what he made of my habit of cutting up domestic china although he might be slightly horrified!

What's your favourite piece you've ever created?

Choosing a favourite is difficult because individual pieces often represent different stages in the development of my work. I'm usually most excited by whatever I'm currently making. Each piece presents a slightly different puzzle, and there is a lovely moment when its character begins to emerge from the fragments of china.

Two of my favourites are Florence and Adella.



Florence is named after my paternal grandmother and was created from a vintage 1930s cake plate. Her face took ages to resolve, but when I finally found the right piece of china, she came to life.

Adella is a mythical sea unicorn, shaking her mane as flowers and jewels escape and sparkle through the water. She is named after my friend Della, who moved to Australia. You can find her at Ilfracombe Arts and Crafts Gallery.

