

I am pleased to report that the legal work required before Mid Devon District Council can formally transfer the ownership of the Town Hall to Tiverton Town Council is almost complete. Whilst this process has taken far longer than was first anticipated we are all looking forward to having the building back. Many of you will be aware that until 1974 the building was owned by Tiverton Borough Council and that the asset was handed over to Tiverton District Council, which then changed its name to Mid Devon District Council.

After many years of sitting in a dark room our salt for clearing icy pavements was used a couple of weeks ago. We managed to get the main street pavements gritted prior to Storm Emma hitting us on the Thursday. We even made National TV because of the snow. Councillor Kevin Wilson ensured that salt was available for use by our volunteers on some of the housing estates outside of the main shopping areas. It has been a number of years since Devon has had to call on the services of the Snow Wardens; and personally I hope it will be some time before we need their services again.

The Christmas lights switch on was a good example of MDDC, Tiverton Town council and the Tiverton High School working together. We focused the event on the Town Hall and the Panier Market. The weather was kind to us and crowds turned out to witness the event. That was the final year of the world famous 'Pants', as the contract was for three years. Work is already in hand to ensure that there is a fantastic Christmas lights display for 2018. At this stage we do not know what sort of theme there will be. It should be noted that we did not actually choose a Christmas Pants theme, in fact the company who supplied the lights always insisted that they were not pants but puddings. I do not think it mattered as the publicity that we got out of it must have been good for the town; and certainly had everyone talking about it.

As I drive in to Tiverton in the morning along the link road I am reminded that the town is growing. Work on building the road spur that will lead to the Eastern Urban Extension is well underway and we have now learnt that the Government is making funds available for the overbridge facility so that you would be able to drive towards Junction 27 of the M5. Tiverton Town Council is working with MDDC to ensure that there are good community facilities at the Eastern Extension.

In May we will elect a new Mayor. This Mayor will take us to the end of the present four year term of office of the Council. The elections on the 2nd May 2019 will not only see a new council for the next four years but also changes to the town council wards. This new ward system has been introduced by the Boundary Commission and reflects the large increase in housing in the Lowman Ward.