



The Community Newsletter of TOTSOC - the Totnes and District Society

2017 TOTSOC AGM

The 2017 TOTSOC AGM will be held at the Royal Seven Stars in Fore Street on Thursday 19th October.



Martyn Evans

In this Issue

2017 TOTSOC AGM	1
St Mary's Church, Dartington	2
President's Posers	6
Totnes Railway Station Update	7
Local Memorials from the First World War	8
Totnes Neighbourhood Plan	11
Answers to President's Posers	14
Joining TOTSOC	15
TOTSOC Committee	16
Photo Credits	16

As usual the formal meeting will start at 7pm and will be followed by a talk by our guest speaker, Martyn Evans, which will start at 7.30pm.

Martin is the new Estates Development Director at the Dartington Trust, working on the future of the 1,200-acre estate, with its 42 listed buildings. He has already appointed six architectural practices to work on feasibility studies, including at least one residential scheme, and aims to bring the estate back to life in a financially sustainable way.

Admission to the talk for TOTSOC members is £2, non-members £3 on the door.

St Mary's Church, Dartington

Lawrence Green



Behind three specimen trees at a crossroads just north of Shinner's Bridge St Mary's church now lies at the centre of a scattered and fairly populous parish. It is one of three good Victorian churches built with their vicarages by the Champernowne family. Having built churches at nearby Brooking and Landscope they turned their attention to Dartington, employing the architect of Landscope Church, John Loughborough Pearson, to design a new church for the parish. Pearson also designed Truro Cathedral and had an eye for the preservation of what had gone before.

The old church at Dartington Hall was small, derelict and isolated. It was situated beside a farm which had once been Dartington Hall, once owned by the Champernowne family. The Hall was roofless and the range of buildings adjoining it, once thatched, was run down. There were no other houses near the Hall and Shinner's Bridge, over a mile away, was growing.

Pearson salvaged as much as he could from the old church and had the nave, choir and sanctuary demolished. The tower was made safe and various monuments from the church were installed on the walls, including the blocked off tower arch.

A level site was chosen and the new church of St Mary and its adjoining parsonage house designed. A new cemetery was situated across the main road and a village hall, converted from an old farm building, would eventually follow. The lych gate lies at the angle of the churchyard facing the main road.

Entering either through the lych gate or from the convenient car park behind the church I find that, paradoxically, the absence of graves and grave markers detracts from the life of the building. There are, however, the three very fine trees: a tulip tree, an American oak, and a lime.

The exterior of the church is regular and neat, if rather austere. The fine tower and chancel were built of regular grey limestone blocks with windows and top and bottom courses of either Beer or Caen stone. The elaborate porch has a parvise room and interior vaulting from the old church. At the point where the vaulting springs from the wall are two original carved angels and two initialled Victorian ones.

The oak door to the church is from the old church and retains some of its red paint. Inside the church is spacious with an unusually high ceiling for a Victorian perpendicular church and a vertical emphasis. The font, set on an Ashburton marble base, is from the old church. The nave floor is a mixture of slabs and parquet flooring. The benches are standard varnished plain pitch pine. The windows are high up in the unpainted walls and feature opaque diamond panes, many of them a glaucous green. In my opinion it is a pity that these panes are not of clear glass; they enclose rather than open up the body of the church.

On the north wall there is a brass memorial to the men of the parish who fell in the First World War. It is tarnished and very difficult to read. The Second World War memorial on the south wall is clear and is carved into a light hued stone. One of the men who fell had the middle name Chavasse, a possible connection to Captain Noel Chavasse VC and bar, MC, one of only two officers who won the VC twice during the Great War.

Turning eastwards towards the sanctuary we see the magnificent complete rood screen by Herbert Read, dated 1893, and perfect in every detail down to the snails and birds on the frieze. Below it on the north side is a Herbert Read pulpit, based, like the one in



Ashprington church, on the pulpit at Kenton church. It is smaller and less elaborate than the Ashprington pulpit and probably earlier. It has unusually large vine leaves on the vertical pillars.

The floor of the narrow choir and sanctuary is beautifully maintained encaustic tiles, a Victorian mass-produced copy of the hand-made mediaeval originals. There are three Victorian stained glass windows in this area: the east window shows Christ in Glory, the Lady Chapel window depicts the Crucifixion. A nondescript stained glass window in the south wall of the sanctuary is unbalanced by a plain window opposite that has the bottom few feet blanked out by masonry. There are no parclose screens in the choir, the originals can both be found in Denbury church.



Passing back through the door of the rood screen we see an oak screen under the tower arch. Behind are a ring of six bells and a hand-operated carillon. A prominent monument on the west wall of the south aisle reminds us that the church, along with the two others, was built by the family of Arthur Melville Champernowne (1871-1946) whose residence at Dartington went back to 1554.

Opening the ancient oak door we notice ancient and modern masons' marks on the door jambs. Once in the churchyard look up at the fine tower with its stone finials, a landmark for travellers approaching Dartington from the north.

The Tower of St Mary's Dartington Hall

Tucked away beside Dartington Hall's range of mediaeval buildings is the tower of the original Dartington church. The stark white tower with its crenellated turret stands out against a dark background of tall, dense cypress trees.



Fortunately the churchyard has kept most of its graves and headstones. Some have been uprooted and stood against a wall like men before a firing squad but there the vandalism has ended. A few graves are hidden by ferns and hedges; an ancient yew shades others. Some still stand, others lie supine. One of the standing headstones records that John Edmonds, native of Stokenham, drowned in the River Dart, aged 30, in August 1840. Another marks the grave of Revd. Richard Champernowne, Rector of Dartington for thirty-one years, who died in 1890, having overseen the building of the new church and the closing of the old. At the west end of the churchyard, just before the path enters the gardens, is one wall of the former lych gate with its gable end, marking the principal entrance to the former church.

Inside the tower is a small chapel and all the monuments gathered from the nave and chancel of the old church. The finest, is on the north wall of the tower, depicts Sir Arthur Champernowne, who died in 1578, his wife and eight children, all of different sizes. Sir Arthur was the first of the family to live at Dartington Hall.

Another monument records Rawlin, apparently, the last of the male Champernownes, who died towards the end of the eighteenth century. It seems, however, that the line did not die out at that point.

There are some good ledger stones on the floor, one, dating from 1697, with a fine skull and crossbones. There are also two monuments to the Froude family, former Rectors of Dartington and connected, like John Pearson, to the Diocese of Truro.

On the modern end of the range of adjacent buildings to the south of the churchyard are two late mediaeval stone heads, one male, one female, which could have come from the old church.

The tower, seen from the outside, is plain and rendered. It appears to date from before 1300 AD, having a fine late Early English granite window above the west door. There is

a remote feeling to the tower and its churchyard, an otherworldly feeling that probably inspired the legend of the ghostly woman in white who falls, screaming, from the tower to vanish before hitting the ground. Nobody has seen this ghost; everyone knows someone who has!

Best features: the magnificent Herbert Reed screen in St Mary's and the Early English window in the tower at Dartington Hall.

To visit both Pearson's St Mary's church and the old tower at Dartington Hall, park behind St Mary's and walk up the hill past High Cross House to Dartington Hall Gardens. Enter by the back gate and walk down the drive to enter the old churchyard by the old lych gate. Otherwise drive up the hill and park at one of the Dartington Hall car parks from where, for your £1, you may visit the gardens, the tower and the newly refurbished deer park.

President's Posers

Judy Westacott

Editors Note: after many years as Chair of TOTSOC, Judy has now become our President, a post that has been vacant for quite a while.

1. Where would you find the remains of the Taunton Memorial?
2. What is written on the sign outside the Bay Horse Inn giving directions to an historic landmark?
3. Name the famous author who visited Totnes in the 18th century and stayed at the Royal Seven Stars Hotel?
4. Who was William Wills partner in the attempt to cross Australia?
5. Which important building was destroyed by fire in Totnes in 1955?
6. In what year was the East Gate fire?
7. Which two famous people sat at a table in the Guildhall in 1646?
8. Name the merchant that the building housing the Totnes Museum was built for?
9. Where would you find 2 stone ornaments that look like the top of a pineapple?
10. What was the name of the wife of Thomas Bodley who founded the Bodleian Library?
11. Where would you find the Brutus Stone?
12. Where would you find three white columns representing the three Leechwell troughs?
13. Where did the columns sporting the outside of the wooden structure attached to the wall outside the Guildhall entrance come from?
14. What did the buildings on the Plains in front of the shops on the right-hand side looking towards Morrison's replace?
15. What important building was constructed by the townspeople in the 15th century?

Answers – see page 14

Totnes Railway Station Garden and Pond - Update

Paul Bennett

It's good to be able to say that Network Rail have responded favourably to the plea to save the garden and pond although it will have to be created elsewhere on the station - it was not possible to change the position of the proposed new bridge and lift.

In terms of footfall the ideal location for a new garden/pond would be the area close to the signal box where most passengers enter the station but the architect for the scheme found this not to be practicable and other alternatives have had to be found. The map below shows the three options which have emerged after discussion. On balance we felt that Option 3 (Platform 1 close to the bike shelter and existing footbridge) had more plus factors than the other two.

Although Platform 1 (towards Plymouth) has fewer passengers waiting to join trains than Platform 2, the numbers going westwards are not insignificant and the garden will be seen by customers of the cafe also by the large number of people waiting to collect passengers off arriving trains.

The future upkeep also has to be taken into account as the present care which the garden has rests entirely on the goodwill of one of the station staff who does it in entirely in his own time without payment. GWR (the station tenant) has made it clear that they cannot be responsible for how it is looked after in the future. As it happens Incredible Edibles too have to be re-located and have chosen this as the best option for them; they have also indicated that they would be prepared to take over the maintenance once the present station staff member is no longer available.

Network Rail want to involve the community in the scheme and would like to interest local schools in the project. The consultation on all of this is likely to take place in the early part of next year.



Local Memorials from the First World War

John Keleher

November 11th next year will mark the centenary anniversary of the signing of the Armistice which brought a cease-fire - in this case, a cease-fire that held and which led to a treaty - to a conflict which had claimed the lives of millions of people. This is therefore an appropriate time to remember and honour those who perished as a result of this war and who had lived in Totnes and district. It is also appropriate that the Totnes and District Society (TOTSOC) should be associated with this.

One of the excellent books which Exeter based historian, Todd Gray, has written is one entitled Lest Devon Forget. In it Gray looks at the many war memorials which were erected throughout Devon after the end of the First World War. So, taking this book as a starting point we propose to focus on looking at the way in which the dead from this war are commemorated in the Totnes and District area (1) - henceforth referred to as TaDa - and hope that by so-doing we arouse sufficient interest in others to dig deeper, for example, into the lives of the people who never came back - as Laurence Green has done with Ashprington (2).

But before addressing the main task of noting how the people of the TaDa commemorated those who had died in the war we should be clear as to what precisely the Totnes and District area covers. We have adopted the area defined by the Devon County Council when, about ten years ago, it identified twenty-nine towns in the county which were hubs for the surrounding parishes. The area covered by this definition of the Totnes area is that covered by the fourteen Parish Councils of

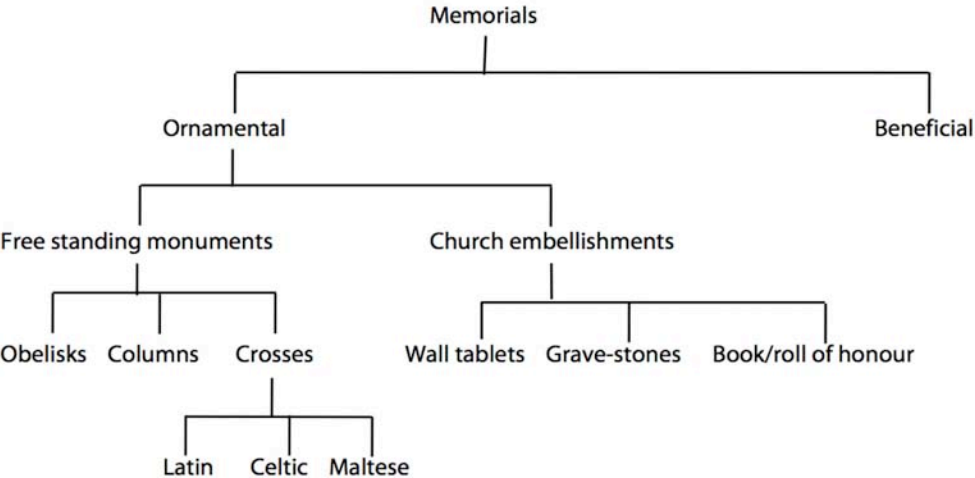
Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Cornworthy, Dartington, Diptford, Halwell and Moreleigh, Harberton, Littlehempston, Marldon, Rattery, South Brent, Staverton, Stoke Gabriel, and Totnes.

Now within these fourteen parish councils there are some which have more than one parish church. In Totnes, for example, there is St Mary's and St. John's. Within the Dartington parish we have St Mary's and also there is St Barnabas, Brooking. Halwell and Moreleigh each have a church. Within the Harberton Parish Council area there is a church at Harbertonford as well as at Harberton. In addition to the church at Staverton there's another at Landscope. In total there are nineteen churches within the fourteen parishes covered by the TaDa. It is within these churches that the majority of the memorials are to be found

In a forthcoming article (which we're in process of writing) we have tried to follow the system which Gray used in approaching a study of these memorials. The local committees which were set up to organise the business of establishing a memorial of some kind had to decide whether it should be of some immediate benefit to the community, or whether it should express some artistic quality. Gray classifies these as Beneficiary, (those which aimed to improve the lives of the living) and Ornamental.

This latter type, as Gray points out, usually took the form of embellishments to a church or chapel or as a free-standing cross. In TaDa, as we shall, most of the memorials are to be found in and around the churches and are of the latter type. But that said there is the occasional example of a beneficiary memorial in TaDa. For example, after some discussion about whether or not to fund a public telephone in the village the Stoke Gabriel committee decided to abandon the idea and opted instead for a free standing memorial. But in addition, however, they agreed to have a garden with a place for people to relax on the site of an old cottage next to where the memorial is sited. Here in Stoke Gabriel is an example of both a beneficial and an ornamental memorial existing alongside each other. And at Marldon we see another example of a beneficial memorial which takes the form of a lock which adorns the church tower; this is in addition to the ornamental tablet in the church on which appear the names of the dead. Totnes almost had a beneficial memorial: it had originally hoped to rent the Castle from the Duke of Somerset in order to provide land for a recreation area for local children. However, this idea never took off because His Grace replied that he preferred “keeping it in [his] own hands at present.” As we say, the vast majority of the memorials in the area are of the ornamental type.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this range of memorials which commemorated the dead is by means of a graphic.



This, based on Gray’s work, was the framework used in examining the memorials in the fourteen parishes, which is the subject of this forthcoming little article. Then what?

This is, really a three-stage operation. First, Gray surveyed the whole of Devon; next, the forthcoming article will limit its focus to the fourteen parishes which make up the Totnes area. It's logical for the next step to zoom in on each individual parish and for local people who, after all are best placed to do so, to dig out more information relating to the memorial in their own area. And then write it up.

Laurence Green has done precisely this with regard to Ashprington. He has produced a small twenty-page booklet* providing us with short biographical details about the fourteen men whose names are on the memorial which is at the centre of the village. We learn when and where they were born, where and how they died, and where they were buried; sometimes even the house they'd lived in. We learn that thirteen of them had at some time played football for Ashprington United. We see a photograph of Colour Sergeant (later Lieutenant) William Peters and his family. It's this kind of work that strikingly brings home to us, a century later, that the men whose names are on these memorials were just like us - made of flesh and blood with parents, even (perhaps) children. (It's worth getting a copy – especially as the proceeds will go towards providing a defibrillator for the village!)

Val Price** approaches the memorial in Totnes from a different angle. Instead of focussing on the men whose names are on the memorial she looks at the type of decisions that had to be made before a memorial was established, and at the people who made them. Both Price and Green drew heavily on local sources for their material – and there's a lot of it about!

There are still a few months left before the centenary of the signing of the Armistice! Over to you! In the meantime there'll be another piece in a future CONTACT on the type of memorials that we come across as we travel around in the Totnes Area. So watch this space - and not only until the next CONTACT comes out we hope.

*Laurence Green The Lads in their hundreds: the soldiers on the Ashprington War Memorial (2016)

** Val Price In Grateful Memory: the story of the Totnes war memorial in Totnes Review Number 2 (2007)

Totnes neighbourhood Plan: Informal Consultation

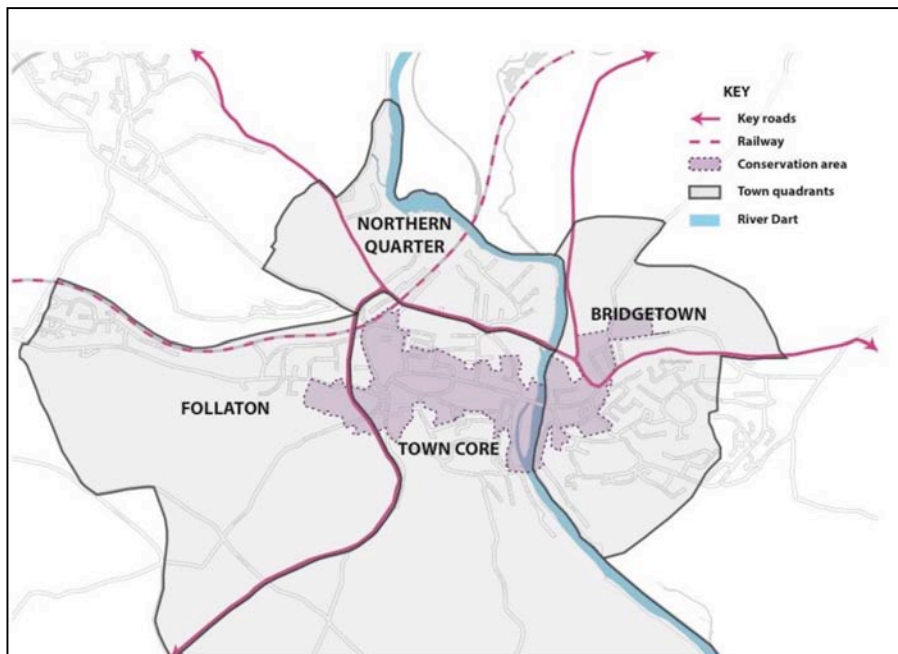
Paul Bennett

Nearly three years have passed since the Town Council (having achieved nothing itself in the previous three years) delegated the process of pursuing this to the present Steering Group.

After several iterations the “informal” consultation draft has emerged and been available for public comment since the end of July culminating in two public open days in early September.

This informal consultation has been held so that we can take account of the views received during this process in the hope of thereby reducing the number of changes to the draft Plan which might be required following the statutory six week formal consultation which will be held later in the Autumn. The draft Plan will then be further amended before being submitted to South Hams District Council for examination as to its “soundness and legal compliance” i.e. the Plan must not be in conflict with existing national policies nor the Joint Local Plan which itself is about to be subject to public examination.

In terms of spatial policies the Plan breaks the town into four areas: ‘Town Core’ ‘Bridgetown’ ‘Plymouth Road/Follaton’ ‘Northern Quarter’ and a separate policy area for the River Dart. It was felt that these are distinctive areas of the Town needing to have their own policies to reflect this.



Town Core:

It is vital that any proposals for change to the Market Square and Civic Hall should be pursued through a community-led masterplan subject to wide consultation. The intention would be to enhance the public realm and retain the markets. The Plan does not look in any detail at the heritage of this area with its substantial number of listed buildings as it is well protected by national policies and those contained in the Joint Local Plan; the central area is protected too by being within a designated Conservation Area.

Bridgetown:

The Open Space policies look to improvements for the 'Chicken Run' and other green spaces and generally better footpath connections.

Regarding the Steamer Quay area misunderstandings have arisen with it being suggested that the Plan is proposing wholesale re-development and the loss of existing amenities which is not the case at all. The whole purpose of the informal consultation is to enable people to have their say as to what might happen there with the Plan policy emphasising support for "the preparation of a community-led masterplan to deliver a balanced package of economic social and environmental benefits".

The freehold of the whole area from the Caravan Park down to the Longmarsh car park is owned by SHDC which with present financial constraints will want to obtain a better return on capital assets including Steamer Quay. Because of this it is essential for the Plan to contain policies which protect the interests of the Community.

It has been suggested that better protection can be gained by having no policy at all for this area in the NP. This is simply not true as the related policies contained in the Joint Local Plan are high level strategic ones which have little bearing on areas such as this. General planning law would then apply giving the ability for SHDC to take advantage of the situation and look to developing the area in a way that would give the best financial return ignoring community wishes. Only a policy of the kind presently contained in the draft Plan will protect the Community and provide a scheme that would fairly balance the wishes of townspeople against the financial needs of SHDC.

Northern Quarter:

Within this area the ATMOS project is underway but proposals for KEVICC remain outstanding. The school has a vital role to play not only as the prime source of secondary education for the town and surrounding villages but also as a focus for community uses.

Any proposals must be driven by the educational requirements of the school but also, where possible, should maximise opportunities for community use of facilities outside school hours.

The school site with its proximity to the river will need a skilfully led masterplanning exercise to balance the education needs of the school against the broader community interests.

Plymouth Road/Follaton:

There are no specific area policies here but Objectives look to improving the range of facilities available for residents of this area should the opportunities arise and hopefully look at providing some form of green corridor into town by the Malt Mill Lake which also might provide a wildlife corridor.

Whilst the future of Follaton House as the HQ of SHDC may be uncertain the Plan proposes that it should be maintained as a location for employment.

The town settlement boundary on the west should be maintained and further development there resisted. As it presently stands the distance between the town boundary and the end of the built up area at Bridgetown is over 4km and further urban encroachment into the countryside would be unacceptable.

The River Park:

The NP seeks to strengthen the role which the River Dart plays in the life of the town. Should any development be proposed it must not in any way limit public access to the river or impair public enjoyment.

The Dart should be a unifying factor between Bridgetown and the rest of the town with the river banks providing an area of attractive recreation.

We do need to work at creating a linear park which works for residents, visitors to the town and those supplying water based services.

Generic Policies:

These are intended to reflect the uniqueness of Totnes which in part is due to its history but currently more influenced by environmental awareness stemming perhaps from the establishment here of the first Transition Town. Because of this sustainability lies at the heart of all the objectives and policies notwithstanding the very broad spectrum which they cover.

Informal Consultation:

Unsurprisingly the consultation has not revealed much that has not been discussed and argued about over recent years nor have any magic solutions emerged. There appears to be a consensus that traffic using Fore Street/High Street should be subject to a draconian speed limit (must be enforced) coupled with some form of 'shared space' scheme to make visiting this main shopping street a more agreeable experience than it is at present. As for curtailing through traffic (60% in Station Road) a by-pass is mentioned but without conviction that it will ever happen and it is traffic management that would appear to be the most realistic route to pursue. Affordable housing is an area of major concern with people looking at community-led schemes, where this is possible, and the Plan is supportive of this.

What happens now?

The Plan should it pass successfully through the examination process and then be voted for by way of referendum becomes part of the statutory framework of planning in the

same way as the Joint Local Plan for South Hams (with Plymouth and West Devon). This means that all decisions affecting the town whether planning or otherwise must conform with the policies set out in the Plan. As a consequence the language used for writing policies must reflect this and words such as 'development' will have their legal meaning which does not necessarily accord with their more common use. In the case of 'development' the statutory definition is "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land..."; it does not have to mean rapacious developers but could perfectly well be a popular community-led proposal.

Very few of us like change but the period of the Plan is twenty years and during that time change will happen whether we like it or not. The Plan is needed to manage that change and to ensure that this change is guided by policies which protect the Totnes community. Without a Plan the Town could be subjected to proposals over which it would have no control; the high level strategic policies of the Joint Local Plan do not give the level of protection the Town needs. Having said that the Plan has to be realistic and inevitably falls short of what many would wish to see; nonetheless to have no plan at all would be throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Paul Bennett Chair: Totnes NP Steering Group.

[Answers to President's Posers – see page 6](#)

1. In a wall in front of the Steam Packet Inn
2. Totnes Castle Ancient Monument
3. Daniel Defoe
4. James O'Hara Burke
5. The Market Hall
6. 1990
7. Cromwell and Fairfax
8. Walter Kelland
9. The Mansion in Fore Street
10. Ann Ball
11. Outside 51/53 Fore Street
12. In the Leechwell Garden
13. The old Corn Exchange which was to the right of the Church
14. Harrison's Garage
15. St. Mary's Church

Application to join the Totnes and District Society (TotSoc)

Individual membership fee: £5.00 s/o or £8.00 cash. Joint: £8.00 s/o or £11.00 cash

Please complete the form below. Payment by standing order is much preferred, but if you wish to pay by cheque or cash this is also quite acceptable. The membership year is from 1st October.

Name..... Tel.....

Address..... Post Code.....

Email address.....

STANDING ORDER FORM

To: (name of your bank).....bank

Please set up the following Standing Order and debit my/our account accordingly

1. Your Bank Account details

Account name..... Account Number:

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Your bank branch..... Sort Code:

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Postal address of your branch (please print)

.....Post code.....

2. Payee details

Name of organisation you are paying: **Totnes & District Society**

Sort code of TOTSOC: **40-52-40**

Account number of TOTSOC: **00027393**

3. About the payment

How often are the payments to be made: **YEARLY**

Amount details: **£5.00 / £8.00 (delete one)**

Date of first payment: **on or after 1st October 2017**

until further notice (payments will be made until you cancel this instruction)

4. Confirmation Customer signature(s)

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Date.....

Please return this completed form to **Jeremy Logie, Totsoc Treasurer,**
15 Heath Way, Totnes, TQ9 5GP He will send the lower section to your bank.

TOTSOC on Facebook

TOTSOC now has a Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/Totnes-and-District-Society

The TOTSOC Committee

The current TOTSOC Committee Members are:

Judy Westacott President	tq9jude@gmail.com
Paul Bennett Chair	paulandsuebennett@btinternet.com
Tom King Secretary and Minute Secretary	tom@seymourvillas.com
Sue Bennett	paulandsuebennett@btinternet.com
Jeremy Logie Treasurer and Membership Secretary	jeremy.logie@talk21.com
Kate Wilson Planning Officer	katewilsondeane@gmail.com
Jim Carfrae	jim@carfrae.com
John Keleher	john.keleher@virgin.net
Dave Mitchell Webmaster and Contact Editor	dave@zenoshrdlu.com
Anne Ward Public Art & Design Subcommittee	mail@anneward49.plus.com

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A form for joining TOTSOC is on the previous page.