



The Community Newsletter of TOTSOC - the Totnes and District Society

Presidents Piece

Judy Westacott

TotSoc, TotSoc, Who are you?
TotSoc, TotSoc, What do you do?
The truth of the matter I will reveal
Who knows, our remit may to you appeal.
We are a local Civic Society
Always acting with propriety.
Our listed buildings we try to preserve,
And treat them with the respect they deserve.
We protect the environment, the river too
All the things important to you.
We monitor all developers' intent
To flood us with their development.
We check windows, doors, traffic jams,
PVC windows and Neighbourhood Plans.
We have reps on outside bodies too –
There's always plenty for us to do.
Twice a year Contact magazine
Tells you what we are doing and what we have seen.
Family and friends can benefit too
So, dear reader, you know what to do
The only thing they appear to lack
The membership form you'll find on the back!

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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.

St John the Baptist Church, Littlehempston

Lawrence Green

Littlehempston is a scattered village situated just over two miles from Totnes. It is across the River Dart and has turned its back on the town which is round a corner and out of sight. The village lies in the valley of the River Hems which meanders and has a tendency to flood. The church of St John the Baptist sits on a small rise at the end of the village overlooking the Hems, surrounded by undulating farmland on three sides.

For some the railway line which sweeps along the valley bottom and almost bisects the village is a distraction. To me it is an addition, fitting into the landscape since the days of Brunel and adding poetic interest to a beautiful setting. Back in the '60s and '70s the Totnes-bound rail traveller would spot the abandoned red post office van next to the churchyard wall and gather up his coat and luggage before the train rumbled over the River Dart and stopped at the down platform of Totnes Station.

Littlehempston Church has been saved and restored by very intelligent and sensitive people to become the village hall as well as the church, just like in mediaeval times. It is set in an unusually small churchyard with a huge and ancient yew tree near the south porch. The tower, a smaller and plainer version of the tower of St Mary's Totnes is rendered on three sides, the north side showing the random stones from which the tower was built.



Unusually the door to the roof of the tower opens from the base, almost enclosed by a porch somewhat resembling a large dog kennel.

The nave of the church is built of square blocks of grey sandstone, unusual in limestone country. The sanctuary, however, is built of rubble, pointed in square blocks to match the rest of the church exterior. All the windows have been reworked by the Victorians in Beer stone with the appropriate Perpendicular tracery. The porch has retained its parvise room with a fine window. There is a slate sundial projecting from the south wall dated 1721. The church was rebuilt, on the site of an earlier church, between 1420 and 1458, showing many typical features of a Devon church of the Perpendicular period.



Entering through the south porch, we notice a fine doorway with two carved stone female heads showing a typical hairstyle and headdress of the mid fifteenth century.

The interior of the church is a delight; bright and uncluttered with mostly clear glass in the large gothic windows. The floor is slabbed with new matching slabs under the Victorian pitch pine benches. Some of the benches have been removed and placed at the side, the main ones in the chancel are on castors which are unobtrusive and allow the church to become a hall, meeting room or a theatre.

The ceiling of the nave, sanctuary and aisles has the original barrel vaulting, otherwise known as a 'wagon roof'. This gloriously West Country feature was so often swept away by the Victorian restorers who favoured open pine beams.

The fine Beer stone arcade shows a very developed Perpendicular style with very restrained capitals at the top of the elegant pillars. Our attention is inevitably drawn to the finely restored fifteenth century screen which was beautifully painted and conserved between 1985 and 1997. It now shows the colours in which it was painted during the eighteenth century. This is entirely appropriate because the screen lacks its rood loft; it has been planked in the places where the loft sprang out from the top of the screen. We can still see the doorway in the wall of the north aisle where it led from the spiral stairs to the roof out onto the rood loft.

Reluctantly turning our back to the screen we see the magnificent Speechly and Ingram organ dating from 1868. It sits partly under the tower, a position it shares with St Mary's, Totnes.

Features from an older church on the site are the plain red sandstone Norman font and the three recumbent figures, two of knights and one of a lady, placed up on windowsills in the south and north aisles. The two knights date from between 1340 and 1350. Their armour is from the 'Camail' period, transitional between chain mail and plate armour.

The lady in the south aisle dates from around 1370. These three effigies are possibly members of the Stretch family who married Arundells to become lords of the Manor of Littlehempston.

Much more recent is the delightful little Victorian gothic pulpit which is octagonal, contains a hinged section and a hinged plain misericorde seat and locked cupboard. Other features are the north doorway which has remained open, having an unusual split buttress on the outside which was possibly copied by the Victorian architect who designed Brooking church.

Passing through the screen to the choir and sanctuary we immediately notice that the floor is covered in Victorian encaustic tiles in a daisy pattern. The two parclose screens behind the choir benches are original from the mid fifteenth century and are similar to Herbert Reed's copies at St David's, Ashprington. Behind the north parclose screen, in a former chapel, are the parish archives, a very valuable resource. Here my suspicion that Littlehempston had once been a larger village was confirmed; the population was 268 in 1871 and 199 in 1996.

Behind Victorian gothic communion rails is a gravestone slab floor with cobbling around the edges covered by a thick rush mat. The east window is undistinguished Victorian stained glass. The real treasure, hidden by a deep embrasure, is the restored early fifteenth century stained glass window. The left and right hand panels are mediaeval, the centre panel Victorian. Wonderful kneeling and standing figures with clear and expressive faces have scrolls probably containing their prayers.

The clear, clean light in the church gives the feeling of spaciousness enhanced by the birdsong and the rumble and whine of passing trains. Once more outside in the churchyard we are reminded that the peace we enjoy was contributed to by the six men from Littlehempston who were killed in the Great War. An alabaster framed memorial on the wall of the north aisle gives the names, ranks and regiments of the fallen soldiers. A slab in the porch shows the names of the thirty-three men who fought in the war.

Typical is the history of Lance Corporal W. J. Forster of the 12th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment. At the age of forty he was killed in action near Herinnes in France. He died three days before the Armistice on November 8th 1918.

Also buried beneath a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone is an RAF pilot, unrecorded on a war memorial. He was Sergeant J Green who died in April 1943.

There is also an American military pattern headstone marking the grave of a former soldier in the US Army who married and settled in England after service in the Second World War. His name is Lieutenant John Wesley Ballenger (1920-2009).

The view from the churchyard is exceptional. We are in limestone country with clumps of trees on nearby hilltops and wooded hillsides. The valley cradles the village buildings with fields between them which, in many other villages, would be covered in bungalows. It is a most unusual village with a large house, Park Hill House, three farms, some interesting cottages and an ancient pub, the Tally Ho, which has, like the church, been revived and prospers under local influence. The saying 'Small is beautiful' applies both to the church and its village setting.

New Play Facilities in the Leechwell Garden

Dave Mitchell

Thanks to a £30,000 grant from SHDC, a £4335 grant from Santander (applied for by TOTSOC) and £3000 from an anonymous donor, the Leechwell Garden in Totnes now has new play facilities for children. As well as a large fort with slides and climbing facilities, there's a dish roundabout and a large sandpit.



Although the new facilities were installed before Christmas, we had to wait for the new turf to bed in and the weather to improve before the grand opening in late March. Several hundred attended, including a large number of pupils from the Grove School, whose choir sang songs.



TQ9

John Keleher

The postcode of one of my brothers-in-law is TQ5, and he reckons that TQ9ers are a weird bunch'. But he was referring (I think) only to people who live in Totnes. But, as we all know, TQ9 covers an area far wider than just Totnes, and it's a safe bet that the vast majority of people who are reading this are TQ9ers, i.e. people who live in the Totnes and District postal area. So let's turn to an alternative source - other than my brother-in-law - for a closer look at TQ9ers: the Office of National Statistics, whose conclusions are based on the 2011 Census data (see note 1 below).

The Census provides us with data on population, ethnic grouping, religious beliefs, health, social grading, educational levels, housing and deprivation. We learn that:

1. Females (53.7%) outnumber males who, hardly surprisingly, happen to make up the rest of the population here.
2. Racially, the people who live in TQ9 are predominantly of Caucasian stock (97.1%). Members of the largest non-white group (0.6%) describe themselves as 'mixed white-Asian'
3. Questions on religion revealed that half of the respondents described themselves as Christians, but few of them attend church on a regular basis. Just over a third of TQ9ers report that they have no religion, and just over 12% didn't touch this question at all! Buddhists formed the largest non-Christian group (1.3%.) Another 2% signed up under 'other' when this was one of the alternatives to Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh. (I wonder what they are!)
4. TQ9ers may, or may not, be a weird bunch but they rate themselves to be a pretty healthy bunch as the following figures show

Very good	45.2%	Good	32.9%
Fair	15%		
Bad	5.3%	Very bad	1.5%.

5. The Census revealed that within TQ9 there is a fairly even social spread:
26.1% of the population fall within the AB group;
22.8% in the C1;
21.9% in the C2 and
26.3% fall into the DE group. (see note 2 below)

Stated in these terms it might not mean much, but in general terms AB refers to people who do/did work which falls into the administrative, professional or managerial category. Those who are in the A group work(ed) at the higher level, while those who worked at an intermediate level fall within the B group. C1 refers to people who work at the supervisory, or clerical, junior management, administrative or professional level. Skilled manual workers make up the C2, while the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers form the D group. Casual workers and people who rely totally upon the State for their income make up the E stratum (see note 2 - so now take a moment to see where YOU fit in!)

The Census investigated the qualifications of the population: 9.5% have no qualifications at all, just under 10% are graduates and a similar percentage have a

professional qualification. Over a third (36.5%) of workers have a vocational qualification ranging from GNVQ level to a full apprenticeship.

The following figures are interesting because those immediately below show the type of accommodation that TQ9ers inhabit,

<u>Type of accommodation</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Detached	17.8
Semi	34.6
Terraced	23.6
Flat	21.2
Bedsit	2.7
Caravan	1.0

while these are followed up with ones which show the number of bedrooms they have available to them.

<u>Number of bedrooms</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	9.2
2	29.3
3	44.7
4	12.7
5	4

In its attempt to measure deprivation the Census looked at four areas or dimensions: Employment, Education, Health and Housing. A household is described as deprived if it meets one or more of the following conditions.

- Employment: if any member of the household is either unemployed, long-term sick,
- Education: if nobody in the household has reached level 2 educationally, and where nobody is a full-time student aged 16 to 18 (see note 3)
- Health: if anybody therein has a very bad, bad, or long-term health problem.
- Housing: a household is deemed to be deprived in this dimension if there is no central heating or if the dwelling is shared with anyone not a member of that household

The findings showed that 44% of households were not deprived in any of these dimensions; 35.7% were deprived on one of them; just under 20% on two. Most concerning though is the 3.5% who were deprived on two of the dimensions and 0.3% were found to be deprived in all four areas.

So there we are. Let's hope we've got a smidgeon of an idea about who we are in TQ9. I don't think there's anything weird about us - well, not officially! Maybe one day we'll have a look at what the census throws up about the people in TQ5, and (who knows?) some of the other post-codes in this area.

Notes:

1. You'll find all this information at postaltowns/torquay/t99/demographics
2. The social group categories are not very satisfactory – they are defined solely by the type of job the head of the household does (or did). Where, for example, would it put a single female living alone in a multi-roomed house, who's never

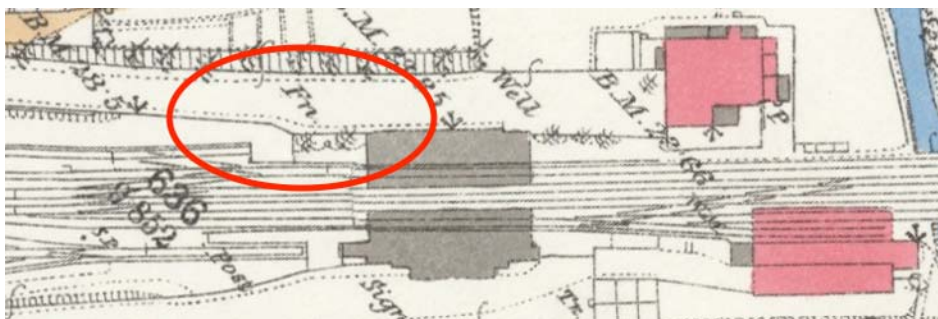
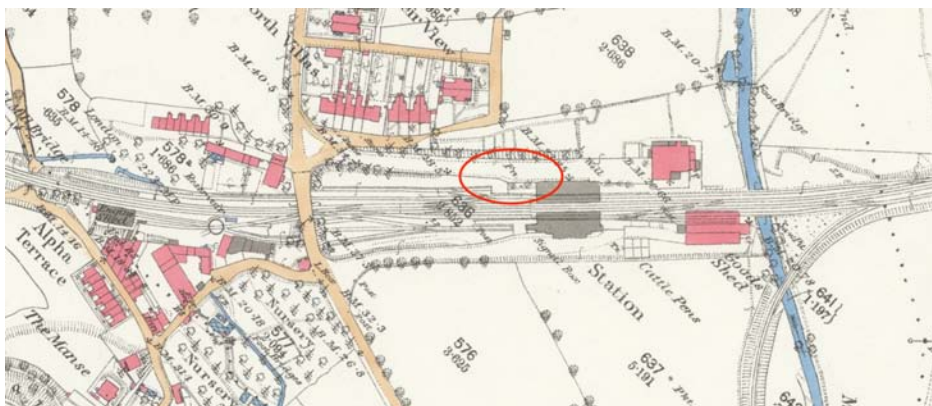
- worked because she finds she can get by on her trust fund annuity of £250,000 a year (yes, there are such people I understand)
- Level 2 is GCSE or 'O' levels at grades A, B or C or Level 2 in other nationally recognised qualifications.

Totnes Railway Station - new lift and footbridge

Paul Bennett

Old stations often have a quirkiness which has little to do with their primary function; in the case of Totnes its most endearing feature is a small carefully tended garden with the added adornment of a pond replete with fish. The old South Devon Railway clearly had regard for their stations beyond the simple utilitarian purpose as a means for people to get on and off its trains. The little garden is shown on the 1889 25 inch OS map, slightly larger than now, with a fountain (Fn).

How many passengers in the past 130 years and more have found simple pleasure in whiling away time waiting for a train and gazing at the garden with its one time fountain and now pond?



1889 25" Ordnance Survey



Totnes Station in 1912 (the garden is clearly visible)

Unhappily the end for this is in sight as the position chosen for a passenger lift and new footbridge will necessitate the destruction of both pond and garden. A sad day for many of us unless Network Rail can be persuaded either to relocate the lift/bridge or possibly re-position the garden.

Totnes station was opened by the South Devon Railway in 1847 and was the terminus of the line from Exeter and Newton Abbot before the line to Plymouth was completed a year later. It is astounding for a town of about 8000 people that some 660,000 passengers a year use it, principally because it has become the railhead for the whole of the South Hams.

In Britain (as opposed to continental Europe where they were constructed by the state) virtually all our railways were promoted by individuals or companies through private Acts of Parliament in the 19th century resulting in a vast range of idiosyncrasies both as to their governance and in many cases, the meandering routes which they took. The construction of Totnes station was authorised by the South Devon Railway Act 1844 which included the following provisions *"They may make or construct, in, or upon, across, under or over any Lands described in the said Plan or mentioned in the said Books of Reference or any Correction thereof...bridges...as they think proper"*. Network Rail as successor to the South Devon Railway is therefore entitled to build the new Bridge and Lift without going through any of the normal planning procedures although a local authority can in some cases impose reasonable conditions, particularly if necessary to protect the amenities of the neighbourhood.

However listed building consent is required for the steps up to the old signal box (now the station café) which has been a Grade II listed building since 2013 following an assessment of signal boxes nationwide by English Heritage. The Totnes signal box is apparently a rare and fine example of a GWR design of those constructed between 1896 and 1927.



Totnes Signal Box and the original Victorian wrought iron footbridge (before it was replaced after being hit by a crane engaged in track renewals in 1987)

Network Rail make the point that the removal of the footbridge will improve the setting of the Signal Box and the listed Brunel Pumping Station and thereby provide significant benefits to the appearance of these buildings for users of the station. The line was intended to be operated by atmospheric power and the Brunel engine house (or Pumping Station) was built for this purpose. In the event this engine house was never used as the system by the time the line had reached Totnes failed to meet expectations and had been abandoned.

What with the Atmos project soon to bring new life to the Brunel Pumping House and a fleet of new trains arriving next year to serve the GWR main line to Paddington there should be much to celebrate at the Station and we can only hope that Network Rail can add to it by preserving our garden and pond.

(with thanks to James Bellchambers)

[Raw Edges – street furniture for Baltic Wharf](#)

Suzanne Heath

Concept designs for bespoke street furniture at Baltic Wharf in Totnes will be further developed and tested by the appointed artists Raw Edges this Spring/Summer, with the aim of installing them later in 2017. The project forms part of the permanent public art programme at Baltic Wharf.

Raw Edges are Israeli-born designers Shay Alkerlay and Yael Mer who have lived and worked in London since graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2007.

The artists were selected from a shortlist by the project steering group, including TQ9 and Anne Ward, a representative from TOTSOC.

The design studio's past work is highly varied and includes innovative flooring and furniture, often exploring colour, texture and materials, but Baltic Wharf is only their second permanent exterior commission. They have just finished installing 'Steps', their first commission at Peninsula Square in Greenwich, a series of modular concrete seating.



In 2015 Raw Edges were commissioned to create 'Endgrain', a series of site-specific, patterned wooden seats that seemingly emerge from a bespoke gridded, wooden floor in the 19th century sculpture gallery at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. The installation was part of an exhibition of contemporary furniture at Chatsworth called 'Make Yourself Comfortable'. This January Raw Edges were named as one of The Guardian's 'biggest new design talents' for 2017.

Work by Raw Edges is held in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Vitra Design Museum in Germany and they were also commissioned by Stella McCartney to install their herringbone flooring design in 40 of her stores worldwide.



Yael and Shay's design for Baltic Wharf, called 'Viewpoint', is inspired by the shapes and materials Shay found during his site visit to Totnes, and in particular the boatyard at Baltic Wharf. Raw Edges have proposed that the seating is perched on the hillside so that it maximizes the views from the green space behind the new housing at Baltic Wharf, and offers a relaxing place to rest for walkers using the footpath, dog walkers and residents.

The Totnes project has been funded by the owners TQ9 with Bloor Homes and Arts Council England. To follow future project updates, like our Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/BalticWharfArts

Transition Homes

Jim Carfrae

Transition Homes is a Community Land Trust (CLT) that has recently got permission to build 27 affordable houses at 'Clay Park' in Puddaven, situated off the A385 between Totnes and Dartington.

Transition Homes was set up by a group of volunteers who believe that we need to develop a more sustainable approach to building methods in this country. As we see it, there are two prime aspects to the sustainability of new buildings:

the energy used in the construction and lifetime of the buildings

the economic and social viability of the buildings

For many people the most sustainable building is one that consumes the least energy after it has been built. It may therefore come as a surprise to learn that a modern 'low energy' house built with conventional materials will have consumed more energy during the build process than it will use in the next 60 years of its life.

We should therefore focus as much on the materials and methods of construction used in new buildings as their energy in use. Equally, if no one but the wealthiest can afford to buy these homes, and the lifestyles they promote are energy intensive, then they are also arguably unsustainable.

This is a brief outline of how we have attempted to address these issues.

1. The energy that is used to construct a building is made up of the energy inherent in the production of the actual materials (the embodied energy), and the energy involved in the transportation of materials and the construction process itself.
2. As far as possible the buildings at Clay Park will use materials with a low embodied energy, which in this case means using materials that are renewable - i.e. timber and straw, or are by-products of other industries like wool, or are reusable, like slate. The materials will also be locally sourced.
3. The main structure of the houses will be a simple timber frame made from larch. The insulation will come from straw bales with an additional layer of sheep's wool in the frame. This will bring the insulation up to a level where very little additional heating will be needed.

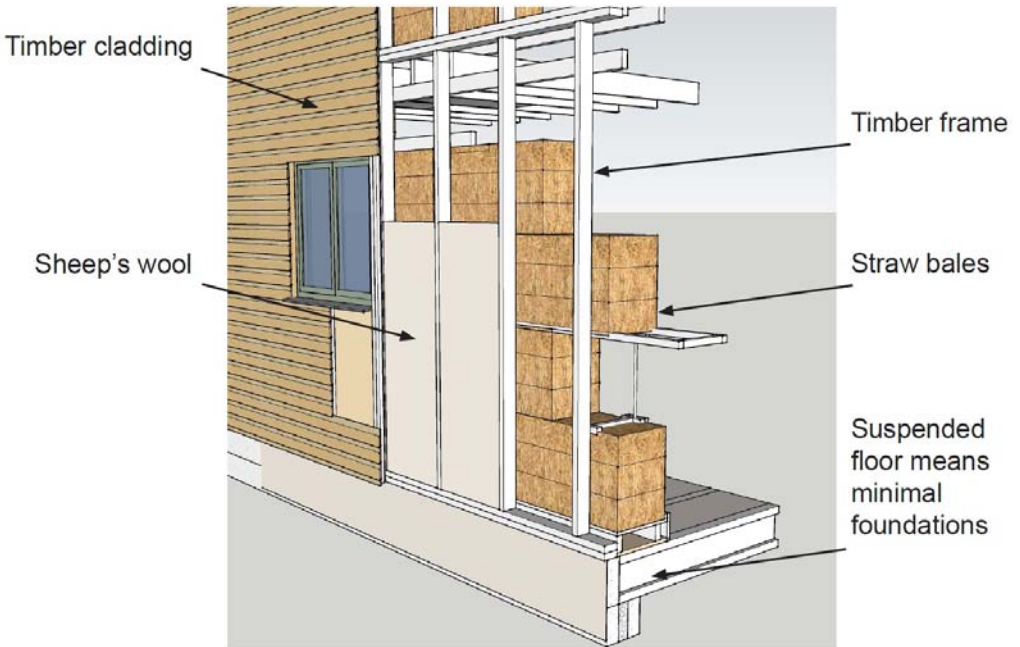


Illustration of timber and straw bale wall build up

4. The houses are also designed to save energy through orientation and in the building form, as they will all be in south facing terraces. The houses all have a passive solar sunspace to pre heat the air used for ventilation, and a south facing roof slope to allow the maximum amount of solar electricity generation. The terraces save energy through the use of common walls.

How then do we go about making the houses more affordable?

Transition Homes is a Community Land Trust (CLT). Because the CLT is a not for profit organisation, we were able to buy the land at less than full development value, as it will only be used for affordable housing. The CLT will retain ownership of the land in order to keep long term involvement in the site, ensuring that it meets its own high ecological and social standards in perpetuity. In time the asset value of the site will be available to propagate more community-led development in the local area.

We have also kept a large portion of the site undeveloped in order to promote a degree of self sufficiency in the growing of food, and the biodiversity and biocapacity of the site will be optimised as part of the development – one of the unique features of this development is that every house has a composting toilet which will create a safe and effective fertiliser to be used on the land.

Posted on the door of Budgen's Supermarket

Note the date!



SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Planning Application _____

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, ARTICLE 13 and/or Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Regulations 1990

I give notice that the following application has been lodged with the Council By:

McDonald's Restaurants Ltd.
01/2017/AF **Brutus Court, Fore Street, Totnes TQ9 5RW**
Change of use from A1 (retail) to A5 (Hot food takeaway)

Application affecting a Conservation Area

Members of the Public may inspect copies of the application, plans, and other Documents submitted with it, at the address below, during normal office hours. Alternatively they may be viewed on the Council's website www.southhams.co.uk
Anyone who wishes to make representations about the application should put comments in writing to the Council preferably via the Council's website or at the address below by **01-April-2017**

Please also send a copy of your representation to your town or parish council for their information, as this would be very useful to them. They may need to make their recommendation on this application prior to the deadline given above so you may like to check with them on their schedule of meetings.

If you are commenting on a householders application, in the event of an appeal against a refusal of planning permission, which is to be dealt with on the basis of written representations, any representations made about this application will be sent to the Secretary of State. There will be no further opportunity to comment at appeal stage.

Development Manager, Planning, Economy and Community

On behalf of **South Hams District Council**

Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5NE

Email: development.management@southhams.gov.uk

Please note: Representations cannot be treated as confidential and will be made available for public inspection on the Council's website www.southhams.gov.uk. We are unable to send acknowledgements to signatories of petitions or standardized letters.

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:

--	--	--	--	--	--

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	tom@seymourvillas.com
Sue Bennett Minute Secretary	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
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Anne Ward Public Art & Design Subcommittee	mail@anneward49.plus.com

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Pages 2, 3	Kathi Green
Page 5	Dave Mitchell
Page 8	Ordnance Survey
Pages 9, 10	Totnes Image Bank and Rural Archive
Pages 11	Raw Edges
Page 13	Jim Carfrae

A form for joining TOTSOC is on the previous page.