

Annual report to Newton Poppleford Parish Council

Cllr Jess Bailey, Otter Valley Ward, Devon County Council

25th April 2022

Thank you very much for inviting me to attend and speak at your annual parish meeting. This is my first annual parish meeting at Newton Poppleford since I was elected as the Devon County Councillor for the Otter Valley ward in May 2021.

Road safety in the village is the number one concern of many residents and this is where I have very much prioritized my efforts in my first year as the County Councillor for Newton Poppleford.

It has been an absolute pleasure to have worked so collaboratively with the parish council under the leadership of Cllr Chris Burhop and also with district councillor Val Ranger. We have worked closely together particularly on the issue of road safety and we are campaigning to bring about the much needed changes and improvements in particular to pedestrian crossings, a reduced 20mph speed limit, and better pavements. Since the start of 2022, I have organised meetings with DCC officers, brought forward an agenda item to Hatoc (Devon County's Highways and Traffic Orders Committee) and helped launch a petition. Very much at the forefront of this is Beverley Raw, whose father Ken Cooper was tragically killed crossing the A3052 in December 2020. Beverley has launched a petition, and if you have not already signed it, please do so. It can be found on [change.org](https://www.change.org) by searching 'Newton Poppleford'.

I am waiting with anticipation to see which communities have been selected for Devon County Council's new 20mph schemes and hope that Newton Poppleford will be selected – the parish council submitted an application to be one of the new schemes. I will be contacting Cllr Stuart Hughes to ascertain the timescale in which communities will be notified if they have been successful with their applications. I am also interested to find out the number of applications that have been submitted by communities across Devon. I suspect the scheme may well be heavily oversubscribed. Given that the budget of £100,000 has been set aside for financial year 2022-3, I hope that DCC will make a decision imminently in order that the new schemes can be rolled out in this financial year.

I am really pleased that there is now a community speedwatch in Newton Poppleford and thank you to Gill Cameron Webb all her hard work in setting this up. This is an important initiative not only for road safety within the village but also because it is one of the criteria that DCC take into account when considering eligibility for 20mph schemes – and the new scheme will help Newton Poppleford's case.

Moving on to other issues faced by the community. It has been a real source of disappointment to me that this year the CCG chose to permanently close the Newton Poppleford branch surgery. This was not what the community wanted, as had been made abundantly clear, in a community wide survey. It is also frustrating because the Parish Council were willing and able to work with the CCG/Coleridge Medical Centre to modernize the existing facilities but the CCG/Coleridge Medical Centre were not interested in engaging with the Parish Council.

It was also extremely frustrating that whilst I had called for the closure of the surgery to be an agenda item on Devon County Council's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, which was agreed by the Chair Sara Randall Johnson, it was then included only in a general 'update' item. This prevented any meaningful scrutiny of the decision making which is after all what the Committee is for.

I have been a member of Devon County Council's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny committee for a year now and it has met four times. I do feel that there are many pressing and urgent matters affecting everyone's health care provision which need to be considered and at times I am not convinced that the committee is always looking at the key issues. The agenda items that are selected are not always, in my personal opinion, those that are the most important and part of the difficulty is that many of the reports that come forward from the CCG/NHS Devon tend to be abstract and lacking in detail which makes it difficult to scrutinize.

Take for example the financial pressures facing the NHS in Devon. This is something that I have been asking for information about since summer 2021 when a notice was served on the NHS in Devon relating to financial pressures. Surely as a committee we need to understand the implications of this notice for the many services across the county. Rest assured that in the coming months I will continue to press for these most important matters to be looked at in a meaningful way. If you become aware of issues surrounding any aspects of health care provision, please do let me know.

One of the most important issues that the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee is looking at is the very slow response times by ambulances in the south west, which is a real cause for concern in terms of patient outcomes. This service is run by South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST). It was my call for an in depth review of ambulance response times that this important issue is being considered via a Spotlight Review. The committee is examining this issue in detail to understand the reasons behind the delays with a view to making recommendations to improve the situation. I would have liked the Spotlight Review to have been completed by now, however the review is nevertheless progressing and with further work still to be done it looks as though the report will be brought to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21st June at 10.30 am. The agenda papers (and report) should I hope be published around a week before.

I look forward to continuing working hard for the community on Newton Poppleford in the coming year.

Cllr Jess Bailey

Jessica.bailey@devon.gov.uk

[Jess Bailey - Otter Valley Devon County Councillor | Facebook](#)