

## Ward Cllrs Report – June 2018

### Development at King Alfred Way

How shocking it has been to see the ugly bright yellow signs erected all along the village advertising 'Alfred Gate'. Yet another sign that CDE have no concern for the village or the AONB, but are purely driven by commercial gain. We have had numerous complaints about this, but the parish council can only remove signs on its own property.

### Rats

It has been reported to me that numerous rats have been seen around Meadow Drive, and around some properties in the High Street. It is also possible that the new development at King Alfred Way has disturbed existing nests.

I contacted EDDC Environmental Health for advice. They offer a relatively competitive service (£70 for 3 treatments) if you do not feel you can tackle the problem of eradicating rats yourself. There was also a warning on Rip Off Britain on 22 June 2018 about more well known pest control companies who charge hundreds of pounds for no better service than your local council can offer.

The advice from a pest control advisor I used was that rats love dog poo – a very good reason to insist that dog walkers pick up after their dogs. Rats also need a good water supply, they have that in abundance near our ditches, streams and rivers. They also like to go up drain pipes into attics to nest in attic insulation so it is important if you think there are rats in the vicinity of your house that you put wire netting over the bottom of drain pipes to prevent this.

Finally of course, regretfully bird feeders can attract rats so whilst treatment is ongoing, you may need to address this. If you see a rat around your property, do not ignore it. Here is an extract from the EDDC website:

#### *Rats*

##### *Overview*

*Rats breed quickly and a healthy female can produce several litters a year, with between six to 11 young and offspring reaching sexual maturity within an eight to 12 week period. It is quite easy for infestations to build up without ever noticing a rat - their nocturnal habit tends to keep them away from human contact and if rats are seen during the day it is usually a sign of a large infestation. Signs of infestation are droppings, gnaw marks, runs, burrows in the ground and smear marks produced by the continual rubbing of their fur against surfaces. Rats need a good food source, water and somewhere to shelter to survive and it is important that anyone with a rat problem on their land takes this into consideration when trying to get rid of them. If rats are affecting an individual's property and there is no other proven source, it is the owner's responsibility to organise treatment and deal with any safety issues.*

##### *Importance*

*Rats are a hazard to public health. They can transmit a number of diseases which can be potentially fatal to man, such as Weil's disease and murine typhus. They also carry disease organisms such as Salmonella bacteria, viruses and parasites such as worms and fleas. In addition to this, they cause damage to structures through gnawing and burrowing. Problems can range from minor holes in walls and doors and gnawed materials, to structural collapse, flooding and electrical faults and fires.*

*How do I get rid of them?*

*Removing easily accessible food and getting rid of shelter for rats are among the most basic and important preventative measures. A rat problem can easily be resolved if the guidance detailed below is followed:*

- Do not feed wild birds or other animals to excess and do not put any food waste or bird seed down on the ground. Use bird feeders and sweep up any spillages.*
- Have a good housekeeping system for any outdoor pets, for example, rabbits in hutches or pigeons in lofts. Pet food should be kept in sealed containers and any spillages cleared up. Any soiled pet bedding should be cleared up and disposed of.*
- Keep your property in a good state of repair to prevent rats gaining access.*
- As far as possible, eliminate gaps under sheds, loose piles of wood and cut back overgrown areas. Keep yards and gardens clean and tidy.*
- Do not leave household waste where rats can get at it – make sure all domestic rubbish is kept in a refuse bin.*
- Only compost garden waste. Any food waste placed in compost heaps or bins are another potential food source for rats.*
- Clear up any dog faeces in gardens or yards as this can attract rats.*
- Do not ignore a rat problem. Organise treatment or seek advice from an expert straight away. If you decide to carry out your own baiting, you must make sure that any rat bait is completely covered up in order to prevent poisoning of other wildlife or domestic animals. Secure bait stations and poison can be purchased from local hardware stores or garden centres and any product information should always be followed.*

*We can provide a pest control service to treat rats on domestic property. For further information [please see our pest control service costs](#). To arrange a pest control treatment please complete the [online pest treatment form](#) or contact our customer service centre on 01395 571517.*

*If you would like us to investigate a pest infestation on other land, or you have other insects or pests in your own home, please fill in the [online pest investigation form](#) and our environmental health team will contact you to provide advice and information.*

### **Transfer of WCs to the Parish Council**

I attended the Asset Management Forum (AMF) on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June where this matter was discussed. EDDC continue to have no policy in place to cover the transfer of Community Assets such as the WCs to the parish council. They are now suggesting offering a new lease. We have already told EDDC that a short lease would not be acceptable due to the cost of the improvements that the parish council wishes to make. EDDC's suggestion was that they might offer a longer lease with a 'break clause'. This would have to include some sort of proportional re-imburement to the PC for any refurbishment costs. The AMF agreed that this matter should be progressed, and applauded the Parish Council for their pro-active approach to maintaining this amenity for residents and visitors. When I asked what time scale we might be looking at for a lease to be drawn up, the officer leading in charge of property suggested 3-6 months. This was astonishing given how long we have been pursuing this matter. Fortunately the Chairman of the meeting also expressed surprise at this timescale and requested that the matter could be progressed more quickly. This has been a very slow and frustrating process for a matter which should be so simple. It does not give me much faith

in the management of larger projects, especially after the sale of the Knowle for such a low sum compared to its development value.

### **East Devon Villages Plan**

Here is a quote from EDDC:

***The East Devon's Villages Plan has been deemed sound overall by the planning inspector. Developers will be able to refer to Villages Plan when considering building in larger East Devon villages, town of Colyton and Greendale and Hill Barton business parks.***

*The East Devon Villages Plan sets out planning policy that will help determine planning applications in the larger villages of East Devon (and the town of Colyton), as well as at Greendale and Hill Barton business parks. The primary role of the Villages Plan is to set boundaries (known as built-up area boundaries) around villages, which will help determine where new development, especially new housing, will typically be allowed to be built.*

*Outside these boundaries opportunities for development will be far more restricted, which will effectively control the outward expansion of villages into the surrounding countryside. The Villages Plan will sit alongside the adopted East Devon Local Plan and together they will guide and manage development across the district.*

*The Villages Plan itself has seen various drafts and there have been a number of opportunities for the public to express their views and opinions on the evolving plan. In June 2017 the Plan was submitted for examination by an independent planning inspector, Ms Doward, who was appointed to consider the plan and any objections to it. In November 2017 she heard verbal evidence from those who felt that changes should be made to the plan, following which the inspector has now issued her final report.*

*East Devon's Strategic Planning Committee of the Council will consider the report on 26 June 2018 and a recommendation for adoption of the Villages Plan, incorporating some limited modifications set out by the inspector, will go before the Council on 25 July 2018.*

In theory what this means for our parish is that for the duration of the plan only exception sites can be built outside of the Built Up Area Boundary which would have to comprise 66% so called affordable housing.

It is essential now that the Neighbourhood Plan policies are put together to back this up.

### **Coleridge Medical Centre**

You will probably be aware by now that the above medical practice has decided not to rent the new doctors surgery. This is deeply regrettable given the level of lobbying they did at Development Management Meetings to persuade the Cllrs present that the community benefit the new development offered in the form of the doctors surgery was worth the loss of best quality agricultural land, the blot on the AONB, the lack of drainage of a standard adoptable by SWW and so on. The doctors surgery is an element of CDEs business plan for the site, given the potential income from rental of the surgery which will offset any financial outlay of the build. A medical practise is in no position to make any promises for the future given the government's strategy for the NHS which is chaotic.

Given the difficulty in travelling to Ottery St Mary I made enquiries about registering at the Budleigh Salterton Medical practise as this is more easily accessed by public transport than Ottery St Mary. They welcome residents from our parish. All that is needed is proof of identification and a proof of

address such as a utilities bill etc. They suggested that around lunchtime was a good time to do this as the practise is quieter at that time.

### **Footpath at King Alfred Way**

The Clerk to the parish council and Chairman of the Parish Council met with DCC footpaths warden Richard Spurway on 5<sup>th</sup> June to agree a plan of action at the entrance to the new site. The closure of this footpath has caused much upset. Asphalt is being laid in the entrance in the week of 11<sup>th</sup> June, then either side is being levelled up and a pedestrian archway put in, alerting pedestrians to the fact that heavy traffic may be crossing. There is also an agreement that if this crossing needs to be closed for any reason another alternative walkway around the entrance will mirror the existing narrow gravelled exit point from footpath 1 into KAW. However, two properties either side of the new entrance which currently have fencing around them, will have new walls built to replace the fencing and this will also impact on that alternative route.

### **Sidford Industrial Estate**

This planning application is back on the agenda. There is a short turnaround time for residents to comment on such a major scheme which would definitely impact on the traffic in Newton Poppleford given the low unemployment rates in our area. Workers to the site (and there are 250 parking spaces outlined) are more likely to travel into Sidmouth from outlying areas rather than local residents walking to work. I believe there is one person on the waiting list for a small industrial unit in the Sidmouth area. Public meetings held in Sidford have been very well supported and numerous excellent points made.

### **Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).**

Newton Poppleford Parish Council are responsible for an initiative to organise 9 AEDs for parishes in the area via the Parishes Together Fund. These funds come jointly from DCC and EDDC. Our AED will be fitted at the Cannon Inn by the end of the month. Thanks to the Cannon for agreeing to host this important and life-saving equipment.

Training on the use of these will be offered in the near future. We have run several courses at Harpford Village Hall in the past.

### **Vehicle Activated Speed Sign locations**

The Parish Council resolved to install two new brackets in the village, one of which will be at the bottom of Four Elms Hill so the camera can be used in more sites in the village to remind drivers to keep their speed down. These are working really well in the new locations.

### **Lyme's Disease.**

There is a big push for people to check carefully for signs of ticks on their bodies after walking and gardening and to check pets carefully as it is now more widely recognised that we do have Lyme's Disease in the area which some ticks can carry. When ticks first land on humans and dogs they look like tiny flattish crabs but once they attach themselves to their host their bodies swell up like a grey pea.

Ticks should be removed with a cheap and easily available tick remover (ask your vet) rather than squeezed out with fingers or tweezers which can result in pushing the infected contents of the tick back into the dog or humans body rather than removing it cleanly. Disregard old wives tales about removing ticks with lighters, nail varnish, alcohol etc as these all 'stress' the tick and encourage them

to regurgitate their contents into their host. Not all ticks carry Lyme Disease but it is better to be vigilant. A resident from Venn Ottery has been infected and is now being treated for Lyme Disease. Follow this link to read more:

<http://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/about-ticks/>

This is a link to a site where you can buy a tick remover: <https://www.otom.com/en/>

### **Bonfires**

There have been a few complaints about anti-social bonfires during the summer months. So this is just a reminder to please consider your neighbours when deciding on whether to light a bonfire. Hopefully the new green waste recycling option may reduce the need for bonfires in gardens.

Val Ranger

Ward Cllr Newton Poppleford and Harpford

June 2018