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**Launch of the road safety improvements petition to reduce the speed limit through Newton Poppleford to 20 mph and improve crossings.**

This is a really important initiative set up jointly with DCC Cllr Jess Bailey, Newton Poppleford Parish Council headed by Chair Chris Burhop, Mrs Beverley Raw, daughter of Mr Ken Cooper and myself. We are putting pressure on Devon County Council to improve lighting and crossing times at the puffin crossing in Newton Poppleford, introduce more safe crossing places through the village and reduce the speed limit through Newton Poppleford to 20 mph. The road is a nightmare for those living on the A3052 and hazardous for anyone walking through the village due to lack of pavements and the need to constantly cross the road or risk injury from walking in the speeding traffic, this of course includes school children who we wish to encourage to walk to school rather than be driven. Speeding traffic and large vehicles are also destroying the structure of our historic buildings in the village as well as impacting on residents’ safety.

It is an absolute scandal that 15 months after the tragic death of 93 year old Mr Ken Cooper at the Puffin crossing, and the knowledge that Mr Cooper did not have enough time to cross the road, DCC have failed to make any adjustments at all to the crossing time at the Puffin Crossing.

On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 Mrs Beverley Raw, daughter of Mr Cooper, DCC Cllr Jess Bailey, Parish Council Chair Chris Burhop and I met at the puffin crossing for an interview with ‘Spotlight’ and I was interviewed on Friday morning on BBC Radio Devon. Mrs Raw has received some assurances that Cllr Hughes is considering Newton Poppleford for safety improvements but I am cynical about the time frames for this. I hope to be proved wrong.

Please sign the petition on Change.org to show DCC there is support for these measures.

[Petition · DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL MUST BRING URGENTLY NEEDED ROAD SAFETY MEASURES TO NEWTON POPPLEFORD · Change.org](#)

Even if you don’t live in Newton Poppleford, if we can get reduced speed limits in our village, this sets a precedent for where you live. I support reduced speeds in all villages and it is not right that Sidmouth and Sidford, the ward area of Cllr Stuart Hughes, have long had these and indeed have just recently had repeater signs on numerous roads in the area, when other towns and villages are denied such safety measures.

The matter will be coming back to HATOC at some point. You may remember I put in a Code of Conduct complaint about the way the matter was handled at the previous HATOC committee. The ‘independent person’ appointed by DCC decided that the Code of Conduct had not been broken by Cllr Stuart Hughes but that he would apologise at the next meeting for refusing to allow EDDC members to vote and make recommendations and would clarify the voting rules to everyone concerned, including himself presumably.

## **Full Council – Wednesday 20th April 2022 - An independent report will be commissioned into the appointment of John Humphries as an alderman**

As a result of a 'Called Minute' by Cllr Jess Bailey, from the Scrutiny meeting Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022, East Devon District Councillors have voted to commission an independent report to investigate the circumstances of how former Councillor John Humphries came to be nominated and bestowed the award of an aldermanship in December 2019.

The motion approved by councillors at the East Devon District Council (EDDC) Full Council meeting on Wednesday 20 April stated:

*“That the Council commissions an independent report by the Local Government Association or the Centre for Public Scrutiny or another appropriate independent body to be expeditiously brought to Cabinet to provide a clear understanding how John Humphreys, despite his arrest in May 2016 continued to serve as a Councillor until May 2019, retained his position as ‘Lead Member for Exmouth’ and went on to be bestowed the honour of an alderman by this Council in December 2019. In particular the report will focus on the circumstances of how John Humphreys came to be nominated and bestowed the award of an aldermanship despite being under criminal investigation at the time. The Council will put on hold the remainder of the scrutiny recommendations (on the future of appointing alderman and alderwomen) pending the receipt and consideration of the independent report by the Cabinet.” EDDC’s Chief Executive will prepare a report for consideration at a future meeting of the council’s Cabinet.*

The matter under Scrutiny on 3<sup>rd</sup> March was about whether to continue appointing honorary aldermen, what the criteria should be, whether they should continue to receive free parking for life in EDDC car parks (not in my opinion) and so on but did not really drill down into how former Cllr Humphries continued to receive support from his then colleagues at EDDC and whether it was known that he was undergoing a criminal investigation at the time he was put forward as an alderman and continued to be a councillor. Full Council considered the matter was so grave it warranted a separate investigation. There was a recorded vote on the Motion, the result being that all those still present in the meeting voted for the independent report except for Cllr Phil Twiss (Conservative, Honiton St Michaels) who abstained. He also made some veiled threat to the leader about the consequences of commissioning a report. During the debate the Chair of Scrutiny Cllr Tom Wright (Conservatives, Budleigh and Raleigh) was forced to apologise for saying that he would “*personally go out and kneecap*” anyone he thought was guilty of the crimes of convicted sex offender and former councillor John Humphreys.

Former Exmouth mayor and Conservative councillor John Humphreys is serving a 21-year prison sentence for 10 sex offences against two boys in the early 1990s and early 2000s. He was arrested on suspicion of the offences in 2016, but continued to serve as a councillor until May 2019 and in December that year, EDDC awarded him the honorary title of alderman. Cllr Wright, a former policeman, made his threat while discussing a suggestion that someone at the council might have known that Mr Humphreys had been under investigation during this time. He said he had no awareness of Mr Humphreys' arrest: “and as far as I’m aware no other councillor did.” He continued: “You know my background, chair. I would personally go out and kneecap anyone I thought was committing the crimes that Councillor Humphreys has quite properly been convicted of. They were atrocious crimes.” Cllr Wright later apologised for the “kneecap” comment, saying: “What I was trying to convey is that had I been in charge of investigating things such as this – as I have been in the past – I would conduct the investigation not with great passion but with great thoroughness and determination.” He said that kneecapping was “jargon” used “to make someone very clearly aware that you’re not pleased with them.

## **Extraordinary General Full Council Meeting – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

An extraordinary meeting has been called for the council to determine how it wishes to continue to run meetings now that the government has advised we all 'return to normal' working patterns. Despite this, the Chair of the Council Cllr Ian Thomas (Independent, Trinity Ward) expressed concern about rising rates of Covid as shown on the table opposite and whether it is the right time to return to all meetings being held at Blackdown House, Honiton. There is concern that the current law that determines how councils should operate is the Local Government Act 1972, is 50 years old and came into being long before the age of the internet. The LGA has been campaigning for the government to update this act (and indeed the government suspended that Act during the first year of lockdown where Zoom meetings were the only viable option, it seems a very backward step to return to old style meetings). Options are to:

Continue to run meetings via Zoom, making recommendations to officers who then carry out the decisions as a delegated responsibility whilst monitoring Covid data. This has resulted in far higher meetings attendance by both Councillors and members of the public.

Run so called 'hybrid' meetings – where meetings are recorded, some cllrs, officers and members of the public attend in person and some join by Zoom. I would support this option, it should surely be the modern way forward EXCEPT for the fact that cllrs that only attend by Zoom cannot vote, even where they are legitimately on a particular committee. To me, this negates the point of a 'hybrid' meeting and is not therefore 'hybrid' at all but discriminatory and effectively demands 'in person' attendance. It rules out attendance and voting rights for those who are of working age and might be attending meetings remotely around working commitments, it discriminates against parents and carers who cannot take the time to drive across the district to attend Blackdown House and against those who work shifts etc. There is definitely an equality issue at stake here.

A return to the former situation where all meetings must be attended physically. This has huge implications for the climate change emergency (unnecessary car journeys,) the cost of fuel claims at around £23,000 per year, a return to a time when only the wealthy and retired are free to attend the meetings. Fortunately despite pressing actively for a return to full 'in person' meetings at the budget setting meeting back in March, the Conservative group now show no appetite for this.

The meeting will be held via Zoom for all councilors and recorded and members of the public can view or join the meeting remotely.

## **Ukraine Refugee update – Council 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Here is an update from our Strategic lead officer for – Housing, Health & Environment.

*East Devon District Council has been working collaboratively with DCC and other Devon districts to deliver the role that the Government have prescribed for local authorities in the effort to provide safe refuge for people fleeing the invasion of Ukraine. This work centres on checking the suitability of property offered by sponsor/host families, safeguarding checks on host households, administering subsistence payments to refugees and sponsor households, and welcome/support/integration for refugees.*

*We were originally advised that 37 sponsor households were located in East Devon and we know that this number will increase over time. To date our Private Sector Housing Team have 50 booked accommodation checks. 18 inspections have been completed so far and all have passed the*

*suitability tests. We know of 2 sponsors who have no guests and may be available for rematching / move-on schemes.*

*We are exploring options for commissioning a support service for Ukrainian refugees, possibly working with neighbouring authorities and/or local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise groups.*

*DCC are undertaking safeguarding checks and are making good progress.*

*Yesterday we received a letter from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (Rt Hon Michael Gove MP) recognising that the war in Ukraine produces new pressures for local authorities and reminding us of the help being sought. We are advised that the Homes for Ukraine scheme has seen more than 55,000 visa applications and Government are currently expecting 800-1,000 arrivals in the UK each day from those fleeing the war. This includes a vulnerable cohort of women and children and their elderly relatives, many of them traumatised and with deep concerns for family members left in Ukraine.*

If you are interested in becoming a host family I can put you in touch with a local co-ordinator to try to match you with a family needing help.

## **SWW came to a Scrutiny meeting on Thursday 17th March 2022.**

We knew that the representative from SWW, Alan Burrows, Director of Environmental Liaison and Culture, only had an hour to spare for us and the focus was supposed to be on river contamination by SWW rather than matters of planning and beach pollution, although inevitably a few questions around this came up. It turned out to be a rather PR affair for SWW with very few difficult questions actually answered.

Some points made in the meeting or provided after the meeting by ESCAPE, Exmouth, were:

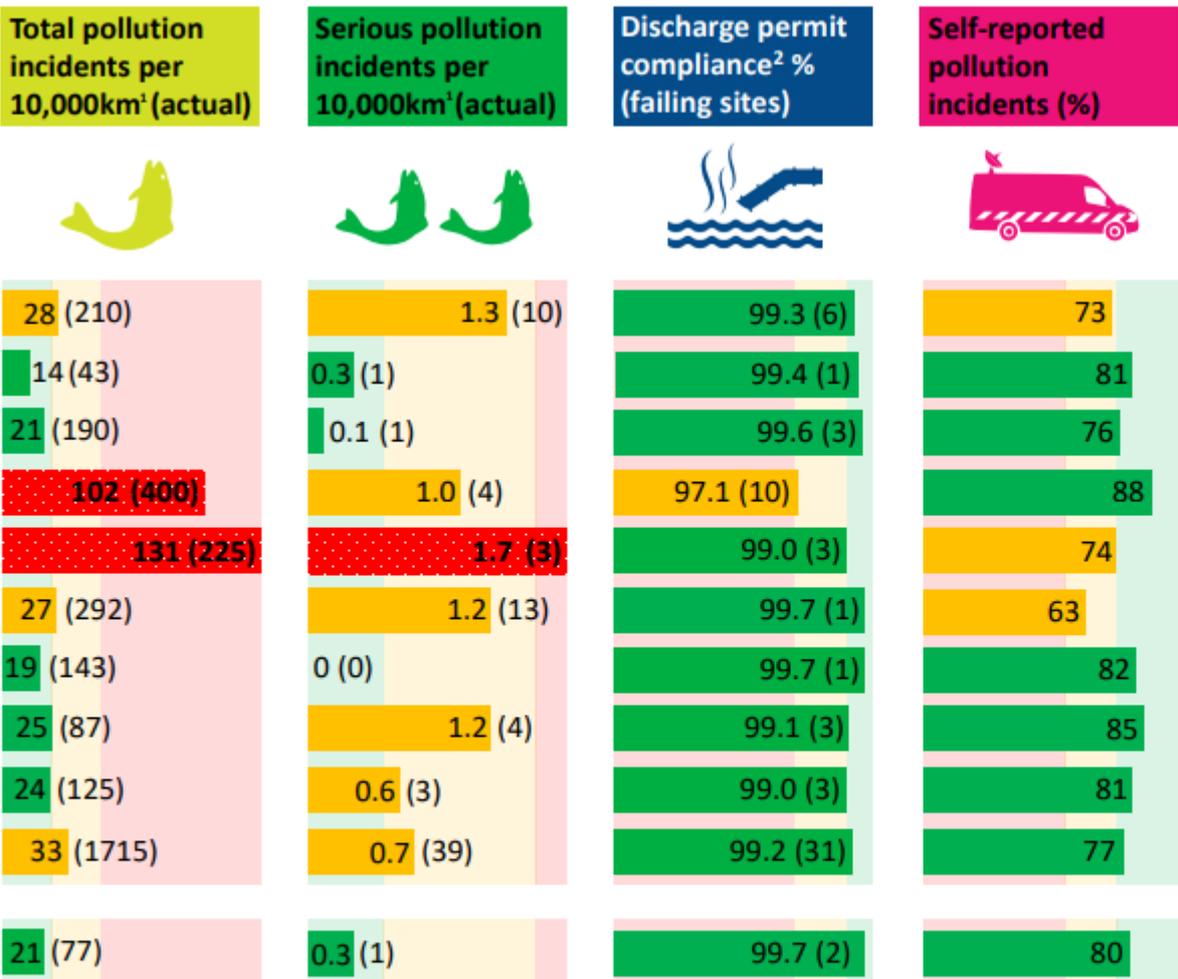
- The importance of only putting the 3 'Ps' down the toilet, pee, poo and paper to reduce blockages in the sewers which continue to be a huge problem.
- Currently, developers are only required to show how they will deal with surface rainwater and not sewage.
- SWW are not consultees in the planning process, this seems completely illogical. The EA are consultees but over stretched and under-funded.
- Developers can connect to existing sewage systems without a care about capacity. There are also numerous 'householder' developments where a household may without permission tap into the local sewage system without checks that this is done correctly. This can result in bodging by incompetent DIYers.
- There is no link between the capacity of the sewage network and the additional capacity increases of new developments.
- Sewage is simply fed into the existing network no matter if that network can cope with the additional supply of sewage or not. In many cases there are existing discharges and overflows showing the system clearly cannot cope but permissions continue to be given. Clyst St Mary is a classic example of this.
- River contamination is considered to be 30% from development and 70% from farming run off.
- In Axminster, the problem of phosphate contamination in the river Axe is so great that all new permissions for development are on hold (except for minor householder applications) until developers can show how phosphate contamination can be mitigated.

- Sewage produced on new developments should also have storm control holding tanks in the same way that rainwater is now required to have via the SuDs scheme.
- SWW gain a net income per additional household but do not reinvest that income in the comparable increase in capacity.
- Indeed with a dividend pay out of £10billion since 2017 it would seem that the income per new household is being directly advanced to shareholders rather than reinvested in failing / failed sewage treatments works and infrastructure expansion of capacity in line with projected demand.
- SWW missed pollution targets for the tenth year running – the Environment agency Chair Emma Howard Boyd said the performance of SWW ‘gave serious cause for concern’ and ‘drags down the whole sector’s reputation’.
- Since 1991 water bills have increased by more than 40% above inflation
- In the decade to 2020 SWW paid £1.1 Billion in dividends, while averaging £163M per annum in pre-tax profits. Its parent company Pennon Group ended 2020-21 with a £3 billion cash surplus following the sale of waste management company Viridor, then paid out nearly £2 Billion to shareholders.
- SWW acknowledged its failures in its 2021 report and said “our performance in respect of waste water pollution incidents did not achieve the improvements we had targeted”
- The West country Rivers Trust, the Rivers Trust, the EA, the Environment Minister Rebecca Pow, ofwat have all raised extensive concerns.

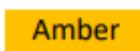
I asked Mr Burrows, Director of Environmental Liaison and Culture from SWW how SWW fares compared to other water companies in the country. He said we needed to wait until that information was published in June. In fact I was consequently contacted by Geoff Crawford of ESCAPE, Exmouth who pointed me in the direction of the gov website that shows that SWW were the worst performing water company in both the UK and Europe in 2020 and one of only two water companies with a 2 star rating whilst other companies had a 4 star rating.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1046503/Water-and-sewerage-companies-in-England-environmental-performance-summary-graphic-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1046503/Water-and-sewerage-companies-in-England-environmental-performance-summary-graphic-2020.pdf)

## Water and sewerage companies



Significantly worse than target



Slightly worse than target



Better than target

Note: These results are drawn, in part, from information submitted by the companies and may change as a result of subsequent data.

<sup>1</sup> of sewer length

<sup>2</sup> Numeric sites

<sup>3</sup> Water Industry National Environment Programme

<sup>4</sup> Severn Trent Water 2020

At the end of the meeting I suggested that in future we have further meetings focusing specifically on:

- Beach pollution and overflows
- Planning – how to get a more joined up approach.

At a subsequent Scrutiny meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022, I recommended that Cabinet have an urgent meeting with a range of consultees such as SWW, the EA, DEFRA, local MPs in order to speed up progress on the three main issues, River pollution, planning, beach contamination in order to more speedily address these matters as the Scrutiny process, although well meaning, could easily allow for 'drift' well into autumn without resolution. Cabinet would in turn report back to Scrutiny. Also, if each time we invite SWW to Scrutiny it either becomes just another PR exercise or a dressing down for SWW, both of these extremes do not really move the matter forward. There was support for this course of action but also for Scrutiny to continue to invite SWW to their meetings, with written questions prepared and sent to SWW two weeks in advance of the meeting so they could be directly addressed.

We regularly see the outcomes from lack of investment around our villages with constant and repeated water leakages in the roads as well as the pollution in our rivers. Having said that, I think its important to remember to be polite to the workmen charged with these repairs. Just recently a workman who was outside my house ensuring that local households, including mine, still had water while a repair was carried out elsewhere in the village said how often members of the public were abusive to them. I don't think they are the people benefitting from SWW's huge profits nor responsible for the major decisions the company makes.

## **Community Speed Watch**

Training took place earlier this month and the group are now actively running sessions on our local roads in various locations and at differing times. Do watch your speeds! More people are always welcome to join the group and take part in these sessions. Contact Gill Cameron-Webb on 01395 568928 if you would like to join the team.

## **EDDC Chemical Review Audit (use of Herbicides)**

*Streetscene Report summary: The scrutiny around the use of pesticides and herbicides has increased massively in recent years, and there is more scientific evidence to prove that they are harmful to both human health and the environment. Herbicides are used in our district to control a range of weeds, mainly on hard surfaces, such as paths. More widely, they are used in schools, parks, gardens, playgrounds, hospitals and on our streets. These are all areas used on a daily basis by our residents and visitors – and often by those most vulnerable to the adverse effects of pesticides; elderly people, young children, pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions. Pesticide use can have serious human health impacts, harm biodiversity and contaminate water supplies. There is growing evidence that glyphosate – the most commonly-used 'systemic' weed-killer – is a higher health risk than previously assumed, with a growing understanding of the damages caused by other chemical weed killers and pesticides to health and the environment. In April 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer – which is part of the World Health Organisation – concluded that Glyphosate, the most widely used pesticide in our urban areas, is "...probably carcinogenic to humans". Pesticide use has a negative effect on urban wildlife and has been identified as a contributory factor in the decline of butterflies, bees, insects, birds, mammals and aquatic species. Pesticides sprayed onto the hard surfaces in towns and cities can rapidly run off into drains and sewers and find their way into water supplies. The cost for removing pesticides from our water supplies runs into millions of pounds per annum. Pesticides do not only pollute waterways; they leach into soil and kill susceptible microorganisms and earthworms, which reduces soil fertility and structure, creating an unhealthy monoculture.*

### **Recommendations to Cabinet on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022,**

- 1. Cabinet approve the ban of glyphosate based herbicides by September 2022 as set out in the report recommendation section along with banning the use of woody weed killers.*
- 2. Cabinet endorse the replacement of glyphosate and other chemicals with an integrated weed management approach which includes the use of the RHS vinegar based weed control and manual control methods. page 51 Agenda Item 15*
- 3. Cabinet endorse bids being placed in the 2023/24 capital programme for 2 x Hotfoam machines (circa £67k investment), required to supplement other integrated weed control methods.*

*Other methods looked at were steam and flame weed killers. It was queried why this couldn't be started with immediate effect and the officer explained it was a question of changing over from one method to another. Although after the ban potentially there may be a few more weeds about, there*

*will be more earth worms who improve soil health and also aerate the earth to help with flooding, plus more wild life, insects, hedgehogs and so on. It will also mean less hazardous chemicals around in lives in general.*

Town and District Councils will also be encouraged to follow suit. The full report can be found here: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 30/03/2022 18:00 \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Suez and Recycling**

Residents will be aware of the staff shortages that has meant some recycling rounds are missed out on a rolling rota. Smaller vehicles being considered as small roads are often difficult to access and they are costly to buy and run. Supply chains for new modern vehicles are difficult and slow. More electric vehicles are being looked at. The new Environment Act is currently being considered by DEFRA and we will hear the outcome of that and how it impacts on our recycling processes in the fullness of time.

## **Ukraine homes update**

In answer to questions about how the additional responsibility in supporting Ukraine refugees is progressing at EDDC we had this response from the EDDC officer in charge:

*In terms of capacity, much of this will depend on how the numbers translate. We have been warned this will significantly ramp up over the coming weeks as the Home Office gets its house in order with the visa crisis but also owing to the fact that soon they will be allowing businesses and charities to sponsor in much larger numbers. We have had to redirect our Private Sector Housing team onto this so capacity will impact on other areas of their work, mainly other inspections we do of private sector housing when we receive complaints from private sector tenants and landlords. We are looking at recruiting in some additional part-time support to help with resources in this area.*

*Two other officers are also now picking up all matters that relate to payments, as like some of the covid grants, the work has to go into setting up the processes up front in order for the scheme to then run efficiently, our Team Devon approach does help as processes and good practice are being shared across Devon. We have re-directed our support grants officer onto this from this week, she will have a useful part to play in liaising with the community and voluntary sector. She has been pulled off other work that she was doing to focus on this. I have no doubt we can rise to the challenges but yes on the basis that numbers will start to steadily increase we do all need to be aware of the impact that this will have on a few of our Officers.*

## **Residents update from EDDC**

### **Car parking permits**

Residents can finally buy car parking permits online for £10 a month. This has taken some time to set up correctly. Please note that car parking charges go up for the summer on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022. See links:

[Purchase, renew or apply for parking permits - East Devon](#)

## Exmouth Leisure Centre introduces gymnastics and street dance classes for children – see website

You can also book childrens' parties with a climbing wall, bouncy castle and pool inflatables at the weekend.

## Sign up before 3<sup>rd</sup> May to avoid LED joining fee

## Be Water Aware week – 25<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2022

As the weather gets warmer, Fire and Rescue services across the UK are asking people to stay safe when spending time in and around water. The call comes as part the National Fire Chiefs Council's Be Water Aware campaign which runs from 25 April – 1 May. The campaign is warning people of the risk of accidentally drowning when in and around water. Nearly 50 percent of people who accidentally drowned in 2020 had no intention of entering the water. Many others underestimate the risk of jumping into cold water. In both instances the effects of cold water, shock and not knowing how to self rescue can cause even the strongest swimmers to drown. Even on a warm day the temperature in open water can remain very cold, causing a physical reaction which can make it difficult to control breathing, cause panic and make it difficult to swim.

If you do find yourself in difficulty in the water, don't panic, fight your instinct to thrash around, lean back in the water and float on your back until the effects of cold water shock pass. Then you can call for help or swim to safety.

If someone is in trouble in water, call 999. At the coast ask for the coastguard. If you are inland, ask for the fire service. You should never enter the water to attempt a rescue.

## International Noise awareness Day – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Next Wednesday 27 April is International Noise Awareness Day. East Devon District Council's (EDDC) Environmental Protection team are committed to investigating noise nuisance in the district, whether it's a barking dog or loud music from a pub.

To help us investigate cases, the council are now making use of the Noise App which is simple to use and free to download. It creates an accurate record of noise nuisance and how it affects you and you are able to report the noise nuisance as it happens directly to the council.

[Download the Noise App](#)

If you are experiencing a noise nuisance you can report this to [environmentalhealth@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@eastdevon.gov.uk)

[Complaining about noise](#)

## Graffiti

A spate of graffiti by vandals across East Devon has cost hundreds of pounds in taxpayers' money to clean. Residents are begin urged to be on the lookout and report any sightings of people grafting to

the police. East Devon District Council (EDDC) has been called out to a number of large incidents, including at Gunfield Gardens in Exmouth, to remove offensive and obscene graffiti. Officers apart of EDDC's REACT team were called out to Seaton just yesterday (6 April) and spent two hours scrubbing black paint, and highly offence and racist graffiti, from concrete paving – the specialist products needed to lift the paint cost at least £150 alone.

### **Small number of Ukrainian refugees, fleeing their homes, arrive in Devon**

A small number of Ukrainian refugees, including families, have arrived in Devon, or are expected to arrive in the next few days, as their visas are granted. So far, more than 300 people in Devon have put themselves forward as sponsors - providing accommodation through the Government's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. There has been an amazing response across Devon to help people in need, through donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, offers of support, and people stepping forward to host refugees. Preparations are now in place thanks to the Team Devon councils - which include Devon County Council, all Devon's district and city authorities and the Devon Association of Local Councils. The councils have launched a website containing all the latest guidance and information for Devon residents who want to help, through donations or offers of accommodation. And, it includes information for Ukrainian guests as they arrive in the county.

**Visit the Team Devon website, at [devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine](https://devon.gov.uk/supporting-ukraine)**

### **Woodbury to get a new woodland**

The Woodland Trust has announced the purchase of Coombe Farm on the edge of Woodbury Parish has successfully completed for a new Woodland. Although there are some funds still needed to help manage the transformation of the site, the funding appeal has been a wonderful success, and the Woodland Trust is most thankful to the generosity of the general public, partners, and supporters. Over the coming months the Woodland Trust will work with residents, local bodies, and authorities to complete a detailed design, with the initial planting this Autumn. One of the first tasks is to create a name for the Wood, as Coombe is already a well-used name here in Devon for various woods.

### **RNLI back on Exmouth Beach for the summer**



RNLI lifeguards are preparing to return to Exmouth beach in time for the Easter holidays. Working closely with East Devon District Council, the charity has improved its lifeguard service for 2022 with several new additions. The RNLI is implementing some significant changes at Exmouth beach this year to improve the lifeguard provision. The beach will have lifeguard cover during the two-week

Easter holidays, from Saturday 9 April to Sunday 24 April, and will then be patrolled daily from Saturday 30 April to Sunday 25 September. There will be four lifeguards on duty, rising to six in the peak July and August months.

### **Exmouth Beach Wheelchairs project**

The official opening of this excellent scheme was on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The aspiration is that disabled people will be able to hire a wheelchair (at no charge) so that they can go on the beach with their family and friends. Funds were raised through the Crowdfunder scheme and EDDC donated £9,000 to the project. The funds will be used to purchase wheelchairs and a hoist, as well as a purpose built storage facility and a contribution towards staffing costs for the first year.

### **Green Waste recycling information**

17,500 households across East Devon subscribe to the EDDC green waste collections service to make your gardening easier and save trips to the recycling centre.

#### **Stage 1**

After your green waste is collected from the kerb-side, it is taken to a composting site in East Devon. The green waste is unloaded in the reception area and visually checked to remove any contamination. To find out what you can put in your green bin please visit [our website](#). In 2021 we collected 6774 tonnes of green waste from East Devon households.

#### **Stage 2**

After unloading from the collection vehicles, your green waste is loaded into a shredder to break up all the green waste into small pieces ready for composting.

#### **Stage 3**

After shredding, the green waste is sieved in a giant rotating sieve called a trommel, this separates out any remaining larger pieces and gives the material a final 'clean'. The green waste is now ready to be composted.

#### **Stage 4**

Once the green waste has been shredded and sieved, it is put into long rows called windrows and it is now left for Mother Nature to take over. The windrows are left to compost naturally over 14 weeks with just some regular turning to help regulate the temperature. After 14 weeks, the green waste has been turned by nature into a black, clean compost. Samples are tested to check the nutrients to ensure it meets regulatory standards and then it is ready to be used in agriculture.

#### **Stage 5**

After a 14-week process, to turn your green waste into valuable compost, the material is collected by local farmers and used as a soil conditioner on local farms. The compost improves the soil by increasing its organic content, increasing biological activity and retaining moisture and helps reduce the amount of artificial fertiliser farmers need to use. Our green waste collections are part of East Devon's 'green' economy.

You can subscribe to the [green waste service here](#).

### **Honiton Leisure Centre – new swimming pool changing rooms and parent and toddler exercise sessions**

- The newly refurbished swimming pool changing rooms were opened on 19<sup>th</sup> March including updated facilities and private showers.

- New exercise sessions have been launched for parents and their toddlers. The sessions, which are £2.50 and include coffee, will start from Wednesday, 27 April and will be held between 10.30am and 11.15am.

## Updates from our EDDC Climate Change Emergency Officer

*On Monday, the 3rd section of the 6th Assessment report from the IPCC was released. However, you may have missed it, as press coverage was sparse. This time the report covered mitigation measures and the key stand out figure was that ‘emissions need to peak by 2025 and reduce by 43% by 2030’. Without such rapid and deep cuts to global emissions, the aim of keeping global temperature rises to less than 1.5 degrees is unrealistic. According to the Committee for Climate Change, based on our current progress and legislation, a rise in temperature of 3.2 degree is likely, which will have a devastating effect in life on this planet.*

*Further to the Greenpeace Big Plastic Count week - 16th to 22nd May 2022, In June, as part of East Devon sustainability month, we are coordinating a live plastic-free week aimed at residents in our district. Are any members willing to support us by volunteering to take part in this plastic-free weekend? We will use this weekend as an opportunity to generate some publicity material to show that EDDC are leading from the front, as we should not be asking our residents to do something that we are not prepared to do ourselves. Living totally plastic-free is nigh on impossible but we can offer some suggestions and useful tips. Please note, contrary to popular belief, in many cases it can be cheaper as well.*

*The final hurdles are being overcome so that the first electric Co Car should be in place soon.*

*Regrettably, there has been a delay in the roll out of EV charging points in East Devon. This delay is not down to EDDC but to our external partners. The officer overseeing this has provided a statement clarifying the issue “Annoyingly there have been two delays – neither of them our fault. As anticipated, I have been advised that the charge units have been delayed but delivery is now expected on 23rd May. The more problematic issue is that, although the project has “indicative approval” for the electrical connections to the grid in each car park from Western Power Distribution (WPD) – we do not yet have WPD’s formal “point of connection” consent, so we are now at a standstill in terms of programme. That ball is definitely in their court – there are no alternatives and we cannot proceed without this consent – our installer will confirm the installation programme as soon as they have the WPD confirmation”.*

## New Action on Poverty Fund launched by East Devon District Council

Projects and activities that help reduce poverty in East Devon can now apply for a grant fund that has been opened by East Devon District Council (EDDC). The new Action on Poverty Fund can accept applications of between £500 and £5,000 from properly constituted and not-for-private-profit organisations or groups such as:

- Voluntary and community sector groups and organisations
- Parish Councils
- Charities

- Other groups such as Community Interest Companies

Projects and activities that apply must help achieve one or more of the priorities or actions listed in EDDC's [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) which aims to resolve the root causes of poverty. Examples of projects that could be funded include:

- Projects that tackle hidden poverty for those who are struggling but aren't currently seeking help.
- Providing recognised and qualified advice on budgeting, money and debt issues to residents.
- Helping people access support from the council and others to see if they are entitled to welfare benefits and other financial help and support.
- Supporting low income residents to access the internet and develop digital skills.
- Increasing the number of people volunteering for local voluntary and community groups within East Devon.
- Projects that seek to understand and address the causes of food poverty.
- Sustainable support to residents in fuel or water poverty, helping them to reduce their energy and water costs.
- Supporting young people in reaching their employment potential.
- Improving health outcomes for people due to financial hardship and debt, including access to good diet, cookery classes

## **The Big Plastic Count week – 16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

Greenpeace are asking people to count and record the types of plastic they use in a week. I have signed up for this on the website. If you would like to participate, please follow the link for more info.

[About Us | The Big Plastic Count](#)

## **Government's New Plastic Tax – from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022**

This is what the government website says about this new tax. It remains to be seen if the additional cost will be passed onto the customer but we all need less plastic in our lives.

### Who is likely to be affected?

UK manufacturers of plastic packaging, importers of plastic packaging, business customers of manufacturers and importers of plastic packaging, and consumers who buy plastic packaging or goods in plastic packaging in the UK. To mitigate against disproportionate administrative burdens in comparison to the tax liability for those who are likely affected, there will be an exemption for manufacturers and importers of less than 10 tonnes of plastic packaging per year.

### General description of the measure

This is a new tax that will apply to plastic packaging manufactured in, or imported into the UK, that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic. Plastic packaging is packaging that is predominantly plastic by weight.

It will not apply to any plastic packaging which contains at least 30% recycled plastic, or any packaging which is not predominantly plastic by weight. Imported plastic packaging will be liable to the tax, whether the packaging is unfilled or filled.

### Policy objective

The aim of the tax is to provide a clear economic incentive for businesses to use recycled plastic in the manufacture of plastic packaging, which will create greater demand for this material. In turn this will stimulate increased levels of recycling and collection of plastic waste, diverting it away from landfill or incineration.

We need less plastic in our lives.

## **Government to clamp down on Household Waste and Recycling Centre charges**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April the government set out plans to ban charges for DIY waste at household waste and recycling centres (HWRCs) as part of efforts to crack down on fly-tipping. Defra is looking at banning charges on DIY waste at HWRCs. Under the proposals, household DIYers would not be charged to get rid of waste including plasterboards, bricks, and bath units. The government says it banned “backdoor charges” on residents disposing of household waste, including that arising from DIY, at HWRCs in 2015. However, around a third of local authorities still charge for certain types of DIY waste, the government says, using rules designed for construction waste. It claims the proposals outlined in a technical consultation published today will change this rule and could save households up to £10 for an individual item, such as a sheet of plasterboard. This is something some of us have been calling for for a number of years in an effort to reduce fly tipping. It still won't address rogue collectors taking your money to dispose of goods and then just dumping them at the roadside so always ensure anyone offering this service is licensed to do so. I have also raised concerns about the rules for vehicles on site. For example if a friend offers to take your sofa to the dump in a horse trailer, it might well be refused entry for being too long or being commercial, even though it clearly isn't.

## **Local Matters**

### **Planning**

Applicants are reminded that we now have a new Neighbourhood Plan which specifies the materials that will and will not be supported in planning applications and it would be useful if they made themselves aware of these in advance of their applications.

**Boundaries that front onto the road** must have planning permission if they are over 1 metre high. EDDC have recently followed up with enforcement action against householders who raise their boundaries above this height without permission as it does ruin the street scene.

### Poultry and captive birds

It has been brought to my attention that a number of local bird owners are not adhering to the current DEFRA rules about keeping all birds caged. Here is a reminder of the rules.

### What are the rules? How can I keep my birds safe?

In order to halt the spread of the disease, the English, Scottish and Welsh governments implemented a compulsory housing order requiring all poultry keepers to implement strict biosecurity measures, and where possible, keep their birds undercover and away from wild birds which may try to share their food and water.



**This housing order is a legal requirement and we encourage all new and experienced keepers to register their hens with DEFRA so that they will receive SMS updates on situations like Avian Influenza. You can register your hens here by filling out the voluntary poultry registration form.** Advice on how to keep your hens safe can also be found on the APHA and DEFRA website, as well as on our dedicated Avian Influenza page and health and welfare post. There are also many examples of what people have done on social media, showing how you can convert sheds, barns and even your conservatory into a safe hen space!

But here is also a summary of the requirements to keep your hens safe outside:

- Housing or netting all poultry and captive birds to protect them from the risk of wild bird faeces getting into the run/coop.
- Cleansing and disinfecting clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing.
- Reducing the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products, and using effective vermin control.
- keeping fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all points where people should use it, such as farm entrances and before entering poultry and captive bird housing or enclosures.
- Minimising direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water are not accessible to wild birds.

Source: [Avian Influenza 2022; When Can I Let My Chickens Out? | British Hen Welfare Trust \(bhwt.org.uk\)](#)

With grateful thanks as always to residents for helping to raise local issues so they can be addressed.

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