

New Parish Councillor

Welcome to Joy Morgan as the new parish councillor for Harpford on the Parish Council. An election was called and Joy won this, uncontested. We look forward to working with her.

Four Elms Hill

Thanks to everyone who contacted me about the appalling work done on the hill. I hope to hear an update soon on when the remedial work will be done.

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF is the government's overarching framework for planning. The East Devon Local Plan sits below this and the Neighbourhood Plan sits below this with more detail about each locality.

The full framework can be found here : [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The main changes are outlined below for information. Clearly as a Council we will need to have regard to these changes in our decision making on planning applications and production of the new Local Plan.

1. Measures to improve design quality, including a new requirement for councils to produce local design codes or guides

These include:

1. changes to the overarching social objective of the planning system (paragraph 8b) to include the fostering of "well-designed, beautiful and safe places". The old version had merely required "a well-designed and safe built environment".
2. introducing a new test that development should be well-designed (paragraph 133). This says that "development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes".
3. It goes on to say that "significant weight" should be given to "development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes". Significant weight should also be given to "outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area", the new paragraph 133 says.
4. The new paragraph 128 states that in order to "provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage", all local planning authorities "should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences".

Linked to this the government have also published a National Model Design Code at: [National Model Design Code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and established an office for place within MHCLG to ".....support communities to turn their visions of beautiful design into local standards that all new buildings will be required to meet".

2. The term "beautiful" has been added to the NPPF but should be regarded as a "statement of ambition" rather than a policy test

It says: "This should be read as a high-level statement of ambition rather than a policy test. The government would encourage local planning authorities, communities and developers to work together to decide what beautiful homes, buildings and places should look like in their area. This should be reflected in local plans, neighbourhood plans, design guides and codes, taking into account government guidance on design."

3. An emphasis on using trees in new developments

The updated NPPF introduces a new paragraph 131 stating that "planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible". It goes on to say that applicants and local planning authorities "should work with local highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places".

4. Adjusting the presumption in favour of sustainable development for plan-makers.

The NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development for plan-makers (paragraph 11a) says that "all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects".

5. New limits on the use of article 4 directions to restrict PD rights

The new paragraph 53 states that such directions, which remove PD rights in specific areas, where they relate to residential conversions, should only be used where it is "essential to avoid wholly unacceptable adverse impacts", for example the "loss of the essential core of a primary shopping area which would seriously undermine its vitality and viability". In "all cases", article 4 directions should be "based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible".

6. Councils should 'retain and explain' statues rather than remove them

A completely new paragraph 198 states: "In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal."

7. Encouraging faster delivery of further education colleges, hospitals and prisons

A new paragraph 96, which was not included in the January draft version, states: "To ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as further education colleges, hospitals and criminal justice accommodation, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted."

8. The United Nations climate change goals have been added.

Paragraph 7 in the section on "Achieving sustainable development" states that "the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development". It now adds: "At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection."

9. Development plan policies for proposed large new settlements should have a 30-year timescale rather than the usual 15.

In paragraph 22 it states that strategic policies "should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure". This retains the wording from the old version, but a new sentence adds: "Where larger scale developments such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns form part of the strategy for the area, policies should be set within a vision that looks further ahead (at least 30 years), to take into account the likely timescale for delivery."

10. Aspects of policy concerning planning and flood risk are clarified

The section on "planning and flood risk" now spells out that plans should manage any residual flood risk by using opportunities provided by new development and "improvements in green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding (making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management)".

11. Tightened rules governing when isolated homes in the countryside can be acceptable

In paragraph 80 in the rural housing section, it sets out the circumstances in which isolated homes in the countryside can be acceptable. Previously, it said such homes would be acceptable if the design was "truly outstanding or innovative" - now the word "innovative" has been removed.

EDDC Full Council Meetings

You may recall that because the Conservative Group did not support the continuation of remote meetings, insisting rather that all meetings were held in person and would require larger premises to be hired to safely accommodate all Councillors in Full Council meetings. In July Westpoint was hired for an Extraordinary Emergency meeting to discuss this and put it to the vote. After 9 Conservative councillors spoke at length on the reasons why meetings should be held in person and not remotely, the vote was finally held. Just 9 Conservative councillors voted for a return to meetings in person. Most other councillors voted in support of remote meetings continuing with the remaining Conservative councillors abstaining. These meetings are not exactly the same as the remote meetings we have held for the past year. Councillors can make recommendations and then officers have delegated responsibility to carry these out. In the meantime we will be lobbying for full remote meetings to be allowed to continue.

Newton Poppleford Fun Day 8th August 2021

Congratulations to the parish council members who organized and ran the above event on 8th August which I understand was a great success. These events are very hard work to put on but luckily the weather was kind and the event was very well attended.

Right toilet in the right place – a public toilet review 2021

This is what the website states

We need to modernise and update our public toilets with over £3million of capital investment, looking at where they are and alternative uses for some sites to make best use of what we have. We want the best modern loos in the right place, suitable for all, which will be clean hygienic and less

costly to maintain.

There are 3 major issues with our public toilets in East Devon.

1. *There has been a lack of investment in and refurbishment of our public toilets over the years. The majority of these facilities are now difficult to maintain, to clean and many require major improvement works.*
2. *The recent public health emergency has highlighted that our facilities are very difficult to maintain to the new high standard of cleanliness and hygiene that users now expect.*
3. *There is an increasing funding gap between our income and the day-to-day running costs of this service. This means for EDDC to continue to provide the services and facilities residents and visitors expect and require we need to review our current practices and adopt new ways of working.*

East Devon District Council has always been keen to invest in its services to improve service delivery, achieve efficiencies and reduce running costs. Our recent investments have included a modern fleet of recycling and waste trucks and a subsequent change in the way we collect recycling and waste, to increase recycling and reduce residual collections to every 3 weeks. Many thought this was controversial at the time, and yet our communities rose to the challenge. Through this investment and planning we have increased our recycling rates, no waste to landfill, and kept our running costs down to become one of the top 10 recycling districts in the country.

We now want to carry out a similar exercise with a substantial capital investment in our public toilets, but with a plan to reduce our annual running costs to help meet our reductions of income. We therefore need to know what our residents, businesses, organisations, town and parish councils consider is important to them.

We cannot afford to maintain our current service, and here is why; East Devon District Council has always strived to deliver good quality services and facilities for its residents and visitors. This has been done whilst always setting a balanced budget. However, successive reductions in central government funding over the last 10 years has made this increasingly difficult. By 2022, we expect to face a £3m funding gap unless we change the way we operate.

Financial challenge

This funding gap will impact on the services we offer. In 2019 £473,000 was spent on directly running the public convenience service. This provided 30 public toilet sites, 26 owned and operated by the council and 4 maintained for others. It amounts to an average of £15,766 a year to look after each toilet block, this includes the maintenance of the toilets and providing water, toilet rolls, cleaning them twice a day and management costs.

You can find out more about other costs such as depreciation of the capital assets and recharges in our Cabinet Report [here](#).

We know that our residents expect high quality clean public toilets, and these have an important role to play in our visitor economy. However, we cannot afford to keep providing them as we currently do, unless significant savings are made. We also need to think about making the best financial use of our sites so we can continue to provide good quality public toilets into the future. An example of this would be the repurposing of the current location for alternative use such as a cafe with a public toilet

being provided as part of this.

Alternative maintenance and services

Some local Authorities have subcontracted the provision of Public Conveniences out to a third party. We have investigated this thoroughly and we estimate the costs of paying a private company to run this service will be more expensive and therefore it is considered “in house” management, maintenance and staff will be the most efficient option.

The need to review our public toilets service.

This review and consultation document lists the public toilets we currently have and proposes what could happen to them in the future to protect and improve important public toilets sites, whilst also balancing the costs of what we can afford.

This is based on some guiding principles which will ensure we have the right toilet in the right place, these factors include:

- *How much the public toilets are used.*
- *The proximity to other sites and walking distances for people to find a toilet.*
- *Possible alternative uses, some of which could include public toilets provided by other businesses or organisations or additional amenity uses such as cafes and community facilities.*
- *Opportunities for innovation, such as asking people to pay to use the toilets so we can continue to provide and invest in them.*

Please do search for Public toilet review on the EDDC website and give your opinion. My own view is that we should not have less toilets in terms of location. We could have less cubicles in some locations. I disagree that an 8 minute walk is reasonable in a town if you are incontinent, have a health issue, have young children and so on. Having recently been unwell, I have now come around to the fact that I would be willing to pay a small amount to use a clean and well kept toilet, but would not be willing to pay to use the current facilities which are often unclean and unpleasant to use.

The review is open until 5 pm on 1st October 2021.

Staffing shortages and high demand are impacting EDDC frontline services

This is the latest update from Suez and the kerbside collection service which is still struggling with staffing shortages, more on this below.

It is likely that there may be a reduction in some kerbside collections in the near future, possibly reducing the cardboard collections and possibly reducing the collection of plastic and paper recycling to every two weeks until the staffing crisis is over.

It is a legal requirement that food recycling is collected every week so there will be no official reduction in that weekly collection.

At the same time it would be helpful if a public waste bin is full, residents take their rubbish back home for disposal. I find it baffling that some people are prepared to carry full plastic or glass drinks bottles, crisp and sweets out for the day but feel unable to take the empty packaging home again, for some reason believing it is the councils responsibility to dispose of their personal rubbish, not their own responsibility.

This is the latest update from the officer at EDDC who is responsible for overseeing the kerbside collection services provided by contractor SUEZ:

JUST ABOUT HANGING IN THERE!

As your all aware the National Press are reporting that there is a severe shortage of HGV drivers resulting in some supermarkets and haulage firms providing a substantial welcome packages, increased wages, and other inducements to help plug the critical staff shortages. Again, in the Press staff for the service industry is also experiencing problems with many Cafes, Pubs, and local authorities not able to provide the services over this very busy staycation holiday period.

A snapshot of our closest neighbours tells us that the experience in Devon is similar though not as bad as some areas.

Torbay – running three days behind with recycling collections. Saturday working is the norm. Losing drivers to haulage companies that are paying joining bonuses

Exeter – suspended green waste collections for two weeks, and are not now planning their improved recycling collections

Teignbridge – regular recycling non-deployments and incomplete recycling rounds, green waste running two days late. Regular Saturday working

South Hams – A recent service change has gone very badly wrong. Considering suspending green waste from next week. Regular Saturday working.

There are several factors why this has happened, but Covid absentees due to isolation or sickness, loss of EU workers, retention of staff on furlough, and in the Southwest the staycation with more people visiting increasing demand for services.

We are also experiencing extra tonnage of waste and recycling materials, but on the plus side we are only fractional lower on the percentage of recycling over residual and the payment for the recycling materials is thankfully buoyant!

Our current approach for Waste and Recycling.

Our aim is to avoid any collection suspensions or reductions. The team at Suez continue to catch-up any non-deployments or incomplete recycling rounds within a few days and it is hoped we can carry on this way for the rest of the month. Saturday working to catch-up each week is likely to be the norm for some time, if we can muster sufficient crews to work Saturdays but as you would expect they are tiring!

There has been an extension of driver's hours allowed by the government, and we have temporarily extended the operational hours at the depot, but safety and staff welfare are not being compromised.

We have suspended "Bulky household items collections" for the foreseeable future.

Unfortunately, levels of complaints are higher than we would like but manageable, but there seems to be a general understanding that there are widespread problems.

The advertising/recruitment efforts have had some success, but this is limited which reflects the overall employment market with loaders becoming as much of a problem as drivers at present.

As always Recycling Officers and Supervisors at Suez are working as a tight team, and this has been helped by our team working now from an office at the depot at Greendale to be close to the "Action"

Street Scene operations

We are still experiencing high demand with our visitors, and just about holding the fort with our full-time teams. It is very finely balanced and staff holiday and sickness is continuing to be a major concern, we have absolutely no capacity to do anything other than core services.

We are having problems covering weekend bin rounds due to some sickness, and currently covering this with overtime, although there is not a large pool of people taking up the overtime. The knock-on effect of this is that some toilets are not getting 4 cleans a day when we can't find cover.

The recently agreed increase in pay rate has generated a little more interest in our roles through agency and we are discussing few possible candidates this week. It hasn't yet brought in all the required resource, and as it stands, we are still 20% down on planned resources.

If we have no major issues and keep the staff we have, we should just about scrape through summer, but it is likely that cleanliness standards will suffer at times.

Please continue to be patient and we will keep doing the best that we can.

Do you know someone who would like to work for EDDC?

If you know anyone who would be interested in driving or working outside and helping to keep East Devon looking beautiful, please contact EDDC via email HR@eastdevon.gov.uk.

EDDC has vacancies for HGV drivers, street cleansing operatives and grounds maintenance.

The council is interested in anyone who is willing to muck in and work with us, irrespective of background or experience, get in touch if that is you!



Recycling and Waste contractors Suez are also looking for experienced LGV Drivers to join their team. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact **James Gatter** at **Suez** on **01395 234500**

Driver / Loader

Contract type - Permanent

Working Pattern - Full time

Location based - East Devon, Exeter

Hours per week - 41.25

Salary - £11.52 per hour + bonus

Complete a survey on Indoor Air Quality

Can you help Sandy Jones who works for East Devon District Council and is a PhD student at the University of Plymouth investigate the association of construction, indoor air quality and health.

The University of Plymouth, in partnership with East Devon District Council is conducting research about the indoor air quality of our homes and how it could affect our health. Indoor air pollution is dust, dirt or gases in the air inside a building such as your home or workplace that harms us if we breathe it in. The quality of the air we breathe indoors is affected by many things, such as how we heat our homes, how we cook, poor ventilation, damp, presence of chemicals in cleaning and personal care products and the existence of some specific building materials.

We would welcome your participation by answering this survey. The information you supply will form part of a larger project to understand air quality in homes. It will also help shape the Council's future housing policies.

Please feel free to forward this invitation to your family and friends.

[Complete the Survey](#)

South Western Ambulance service under pressure

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) is urging people to use its service sensibly – after experiencing its busiest week on record for the second time so far this month. SWASFT responded to 23,088 incidents during the seven days up until Sunday, which is equivalent to one incident every 26 seconds.

Ahead of what is expected to be a very busy school summer holiday period in the South West, SWASFT says it must continue to prioritise speaking to and treating the most seriously injured and unwell patients.

To allow it to prioritise patients effectively, the Trust is asking everyone who uses its service to do so sensibly. People should only to call [999](#) in a genuine, life-threatening emergency, for example:

- Chest pain / breathing difficulties / heart attack
- Stroke
- Severe bleeding
- Severe allergic reactions
- Severe burns or scalds
- Serious head injuries
- Major trauma such as a road traffic accident or a fall from height.

They should not ring back to ask for an estimated arrival time, and should only call back if the patient's condition worsens or they no longer need an ambulance. The Trust is also encouraging people to look after themselves and others during this period of very warm and dry [weather](#). They

are advised to drink plenty of water, limit their exposure to direct sunlight, and check on those who are vulnerable. People going out on daytrips or visiting the region are asked to bring their regular medication, as well as essentials such as sunscreen, antiseptic remedies and paracetamol.

Complaints and Concerns

Dog poo bins King Alfred Way

Two new dog poo bins have been authorised for King Alfred Way. However, EDDC have confirmed that they do not currently have the capacity to take on new bins in their rounds due to the current staff shortages. The parish council have looked at options and hope to find a private contractor in the short term who can arrange for these bins to be emptied so the bins can stay in situ.

Low hanging branches on trees in Chestnut Way

A resident has pointed out the danger of low branches on the trees, especially for the blind or partially sighted. This has been reported to EDDC Trees officers for action.

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

Val Ranger , Ward Councillor, Newton Poppleford and Harpford
Tel 07475 201 340 or email vranger@btinternet.com..