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End of 'virtual' Council Meetings on Teams or Zoom

From May 7th councils in England are no longer permitted to hold meetings remotely, after the Government did not legislate to extend their ability to do so and a High Court claim to establish councils' ongoing legal right to do so was lost. Even legal officers at EDDC were astonished at this turn of events. I had felt sure that sanity would prevail and the right to hold meetings remotely would continue. What is more absurd is that at the time of the ruling Councils were compelled to meet in-person even while indoor gatherings were still banned on public health grounds. The progress in public access and participation in Council meetings is more difficult to achieve when meetings have to be held in council buildings which may be remote from where people live. Remote meetings meant more councillors were able to attend more meetings and juggle jobs and family

more easily, not to mention the decrease in vehicle journeys to address the climate change emergency and decrease in travel expense claims.

A High Court claim was brought by Hertfordshire County Council, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Lawyers in Local Government, and sought a declaration from the court that the word 'meeting' in local government legislation can be read as referring to virtual meetings as well as in-person meetings.

However, the High Court ruled that existing legislation does not allow meetings to be held virtually. This means that primary legislation, which to date the government has not pursued, is required before further remote or 'hybrid' in-person/remote council meetings can take place. The requirement for councils to recommence in-person comes at a time when indoor events and gatherings were still prohibited under the Government's Coronavirus Roadmap.

I know from teaching that working fully from home and holding meetings remotely works very well but trying to run a hybrid system of both centre based and remote attendees at the same time via the live streaming is a whole different ball game. It will be no different for council meetings. EDDC Cabinet was the first 'in person' meeting since the third lockdown to be held at Blackdown House, Honiton on Wednesday 12th May. The usual meeting room where full council meetings are held for 59 councillors plus officers (it's a tight squeeze and very uncomfortable when full) is now deemed suitable only for meetings of up to 16 people so only smaller committee meetings can be held there.

Only councillors who attend in person can vote in the meeting. Officers who support the meeting work remotely from other rooms in the building. There was a breakdown in technology at that first meeting, so the meeting had to be postponed for 15 minutes. In addition, councillors were getting audio feedback and taking their headphones on and off throughout to try to hear properly. They did complete the meeting but it demonstrated very well the challenges ahead that we face

Furthermore it is a legal requirement that EDDC hold an Annual Meeting within a certain timescale so for the 25th May EDDC Annual meeting they have had to hire Westpoint exhibition centre in order to be able to have all 59 councillors there, socially distanced. I am not confident about the technology working well in that venue, there is an additional cost burden which is absurd and unnecessary.

Meanwhile, MPs retain the right to participate in house of commons proceedings remotely until at least June 21st. Could this possibly suggest a lack of joined up thinking?

The Parish Council holds its first 'in person' meeting since last spring on Monday 24th May @ 7.00 pm, Newton Poppleford Pavilion. All welcome.

EDDC Council Plan 2021 - 2023

4 workshops were held recently for the new council plan. This outlines key priorities for the next two years. As I have discussed previously one of the problems facing councils now is the 60% cut in government funding. EDDC Council staff have never been under so much pressure as they faced this year with housing, planning, Street Scene (which covers recycling, rubbish collection, street cleaning, toilet cleaning several times a day, general maintenance of EDDC land and property) and the benefits support areas facing more demands than ever during a time of high stress and staff sickness.

There has been a massive loss of income from car parking for example while staffing costs have risen with the additional CV-19 precautions being put in place. Residents are still paying their council tax

and expect the same standards of service. We still face massive problems with coastal erosion around our coastline and are working with other agencies to address this. The council still needs to support its residents in numerous ways. At the same time the council are being given just 40% of the income by central government than they received in 2010 and needs to find other ways of making an income within legal constraints on how councils can do this. Any suggestion that the council 'sweats its assets' by raising charges to residents is met with great criticism understandably.

Imagine this in your own home; your wages or benefits fall by 40% while all other living costs rise (food, petrol, utilities, home maintenance, the cost of transport so you can continue to work etc) where do you cut costs, how can you find other ways to raise your income and how do you explain this to your dependents who have all become used to a certain standard of living? Furthermore, councils have to show a balanced budget each year by law. To go 'overdrawn' as a council is not permitted.

The initial agreement from the four workshops was that there should be three priorities:

- 1) **A greener East Devon** which prioritises issues arising from climate change and supports our natural environment. This thread should run through all other policies.
- 2) **Better Homes and Communities for all** with a priority on the importance of good quality, affordable housing suitable in size and location. Poverty caused by the loss of employment, illness or disability is an increasing issue and will be a high priority. (NB this included a lot of discussion around the use of the words 'affordable housing' and how meaningless this term is in practical terms given that 80% of market value in this area means that even 'affordable' houses are very expensive). There was a preference for more traditional 'council housing' that both give a service to others at affordable rates and generate income for the council.

It was agreed we should continue to lobby for the reform of 'Right to Buy' which results in a loss of income and assets for the council. Under 'Right to Buy' (RTB) socially rented homes are bought faster than councils can build and replace them. RTB rented council and affordable homes are discounted according to how long you have rented, the area you live in, type of property and so on. Local authorities can only keep 30% of RTB receipts whilst the rest of the money goes to the Treasury. And yet the government expects more affordable homes to be provided by local authorities who cannot possibly keep up as 4 homes have to be sold for them to be able to afford to build one! The Local Government Association is lobbying for councils to be able to keep 100% of receipts so they can continue to help more people find a permanent home.

- 3) **A resilient Economy** bringing prosperity to the district, notwithstanding the current challenging circumstances.

The plan will go through various committees for comments and fleshing out of the full document which will be considerable, with cross references to all policies throughout.

Public toilets

Councils do not have a statutory duty to provide public toilets. This is some background to what started the provision of public toilets according to Historic England:

"In 1851 the Great Exhibition took place in Hyde Park, London. The refreshment rooms featured public conveniences for which a small charge was made. By the time the exhibition closed over 800,000 visitors had paid more than £2,000 for use of the facilities. And so was born the concept of 'spending a penny' to use the loo". [Spending a Penny: an Exploration of England's Public Toilets | Historic England](#). Certainly I remember having to pay for public toilets until my twenties I think. They

were often built underground so as not to be unsightly; they were often quite grand inside. Initially only available for men, public toilets later became available for everyone and over time the penny charge was dropped. We have now come to expect to use public toilets at no cost.

At some point we have all been very grateful for access to a public loo, and more so with children, for the elderly, for anyone with a medical condition and so on. One problem is now that loos are unattended, they are sometimes misused and deliberately vandalised often in the most disgusting way, they are old, tired and not places you would choose to go ideally. Our own WCs in the car park Newton Poppleford cost £5,000 a year to clean and its not even possible to guarantee they are clean when you visit them, depending on who used it last. CV-19 has meant additional cleaning routines have to be in place for the public toilets that have remained open, this all puts up costs.

So EDDC is having to look at what it needs to do to upgrade or replace toilet blocks and how to fund this. A resident has written to the council suggesting we lobby for the government to make the provision of public toilets statutory as this would hopefully bring some funding with it, I think this is a good idea. It is likely an EDDC consultation will be taking place in the near future about how to best fund an upgrade to our tired and run down council owned public toilets.

Neighbourhood Plan referendum

You will read elsewhere in this magazine that this was successfully voted for by a majority of 87% (735 votes). The response rate was excellent and the steering group are so grateful for the support of local residents. I was concerned that residents may not remember all the consultations that have taken place historically which has fed into this such as the whole parish housing consultation the results of which were collated and evaluated by Devon Communities Together, the whole parish medical questionnaire and numerous open days and events. This will go to EDDC Cabinet on 9th June to be formally 'made' along with two other Neighbourhood Plans for Farringdon and Otterton. The document will be used to determine planning decisions in the future.

Newton Poppleford Doctors Surgery Consultation now open

The NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group and the Coleridge Medical Centre have now opened a consultation on the use of the surgery in the corner of the car park in Newton Poppleford. Here are some extracts from the 12 page letter dated 12th May 2021:

We are keen to hear your feedback and experience following the temporary closure of the Newton Poppleford branch surgery since March 2020. As a result of pressures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, services at the branch surgery have been temporarily suspended and general practice services are available to you at our main site, Coleridge Medical Centre, in Ottery St Mary. The limited service at Newton Poppleford has been under review for a number of years, and following the temporary closure, we want to understand the impact that this has had on people in Newton Poppleford and the surrounding areas, if any.

We are only able to provide a limited GP service at Newton Poppleford for two mornings per week and the building isn't in line with modern healthcare facilities. Therefore, we want to hear from people in Newton Poppleford and the surrounding areas who have previously used the branch surgery. We also want to hear from any Newton Poppleford patients about the effect on a possible option to permanently close the branch surgery and with a choice to register at Sid Valley Practice or remain with Coleridge Medical Centre...

As part of their Improvement Project1 Sid Valley Practice is proposing to expand its' practice area and register people from Newton Poppleford. Coleridge Medical Centre is also considering a reduction in its' boundary to exclude Newton Poppleford. This will mean that the village of Newton

Poppleford will fall within the Sid Valley Practice area and enable anyone from the village who wishes to will be able to register with Sid Valley Practice. Sid Valley Practice has a dispensing pharmacy on site and is approximately 2.9 miles away from Newton Poppleford and on a direct bus route (7 minute journey time). If this were to happen, it's important to note that no one currently registered with Newton Poppleford would be asked to leave or register elsewhere.

We plan to gather feedback in a variety of ways from patients who used the Newton Poppleford branch surgery in the preceding six months prior to March 2020, using a variety of ways:

- *SMS/Test message or email to patients, inviting them to participate in the engagement. A letter outlining details of the engagement sent to patients in the cohort described above if we are unable to text*
- *Online questionnaire for completion*
- *Hard copy questionnaire forms available from a box outside Newton Poppleford branch surgery and from Coleridge Medical Centre in Ottery St Mary*
- *Engagement with the practice's Patient Participation Group • Details of the engagement on our practice website's and social media*
- *Share content with local media to raise awareness*
- *While we will mainly be targeting the engagement with people who used Newton Poppleford site, other residents from Newton Poppleford and surrounding areas will be welcome to share their views as part of this engagement.*

It is proposed that the period of engagement will commence for a minimum period of 21 days on Wednesday 12th May 2021 and is scheduled to conclude on Wednesday 2nd June 2021. However, feedback received after this time will still continue to be considered on an ongoing basis as they consider the next steps.

Bonfires

EDDC recently released this information: *There has been an increase in the number of people having bonfires across East Devon, prompting a call for residents to remain respectful to their neighbours and consider more environmentally friendly ways of disposing their waste.*

Bonfires are not the best disposal method for waste, so really should be a last resort. Not only can they be risk to the person overseeing it but also properties if it gets out of hand. They can also cause toxic fumes depending on what is burnt – especially plastics, causing poor air quality, becoming a nuisance to neighbours and other people nearby. Other mainstream forms of waste disposal are more environmentally friendly and safer! East Devon District Council (EDDC) offers a number of kerbside collection services for recycling and [bulky \(large\) waste](#). It also has nearly 16,000 subscribers to [kerbside green waste collections](#) – subscriptions cost just £48 a year! Resident are also encouraged to make the most out of our [recycling centres](#).

If you have ruled out all other disposal methods and the only way is to have a bonfire, please consider the following:

PLEASE DO:

- *Inform your neighbours.*
- *Burn only during the day.*
- *Locate the bonfire as far away from neighbours as possible.*
- *Have a small fire – it must be controllable and hot enough to burn with minimal smoke.*
- *Consider the weather – ideally no wind or a light breeze, blowing away from nearby houses. Monitor changes in the wind/smoke direction.*

- Only burn suitable materials – Materials must be dry - this will burn quickly and give off minimal smoke and smell. You may be able to burn dry garden waste, clean wood, paper or card.
- Supervise the burning of waste - do not leave it unattended.
- Have water available to extinguish the fire.
- If renting check for the approval of your Landlord or Housing provider.

PLEASE DON'T:

- Have many bonfires – neighbours are more likely to complain if you often have bonfires.
- Burn the following: household rubbish, rubber, oil, green garden waste, animal bedding, plastic, tyres, foam or paint - these can produce potentially toxic dark smoke which is unacceptable and might be an offence.
- Leave a fire unattended or leave it to smoulder - douse it with water if necessary and make sure it is out and will not continue to smoke once left.
- Use an accelerant to light a fire - oil, petrol or methylated spirits could cause harm to yourself and the environment.
- Burn furniture - it is likely to emit significant dark smoke and toxic pollutants.
- Burn at weekends or bank holidays - when people want to enjoy their homes and gardens.
- Burn during foggy conditions – the smoke will not be able to disperse.

Complaining about a bonfire:

If you are affected by a problem of regular bonfire smoke, you may consider the following options: Approach your neighbour first - explain the problem to them. You might find this awkward, but they may not be aware of the problem and it may make them more considerate when planning and lighting a bonfire in the future. If you aren't able to talk to them, perhaps put a note through their door explaining the problem. If this approach fails – contact the Environmental Health service by filling in an on-line form or emailing environmentalhealth@eastdevon.gov.uk. You can ring EDDC on 01395 517456.

Seasonal flower displays swapped out for perennials across East Devon

EDDC released this information this week:

Beautiful flowering and wildlife-attracting plants that return year on year are going to be planted across East Devon's parks and greenspaces. East Devon District Council (EDDC) is sowing seeds of change in the way it manages its green spaces, in a bid to be more environmentally friendly. Part of these plans involve a reduction in seasonal bedding displays to include more permanent planting designs.

It all comes as part of EDDC's mission to take positive steps to reduce its carbon footprint, use resources more sustainably and increase biodiversity. EDDC is not alone in its approach, much of the horticultural industry is moving this way. You only have to look at the Chelsea Flower Show to see the interest and vibrancy being created through perennial planting schemes.

Due to a cold and dry spring, the change does mean some of East Devon's newly planted beds are looking less full but as the weather warms up they will flourish and we will supplement with further splashes of colour and bulbs. Planting younger, smaller species gives the best chance of establishing a full healthy plant later in life so please bear with us and watch these spaces grow.

These are a number of reasons why EDDC has changed its approach, including:

- *Permanent planting will help to create mini eco systems and habitat for bugs, bees and birds to flourish.*
- *Plants will be selected to provide nectar, essential to our pollinators to thrive and survive. Think of a café for bees and butterflies.*
- *Plants will be selected on their drought tolerance and suitability to the endemic environment but also their wonderful flowers, form, texture or scent.*
- *Planting can be divided and recycled in future seasons – less plastic pots and trays.*
- *Reduced cultivation of the beds allows earth worms and mycorrhizal fungi to flourish - big buddies of plant life.*

Why EDDC is reducing its traditional bedding displays:

- *Bedding plants are intensively produced and provide a monoculture environment which doesn't allow wildlife to flourish.*
- *They don't attract enough pollinators essential to biodiversity.*
- *They are single use and are thrown away at the end of their short life. There is a seismic shift to move way from single use products for good reason.*
- *They require intensive watering which is an unnecessary waste of natural resource.*
- *The constant digging over of the beds disturbs the natural soil culture.*

Councillor Denise Bickley, EDDC's assistant portfolio holder climate action and emergencies said:

"I am delighted to totally support this change in policy. We must do all we can to help the planet recover, by doing the most we can in our own area. This is a win on so many levels - helping biodiversity, reducing plastic waste and transport pollution, allowing soil quality to improve, reducing inadvertent damage to peatbogs just for starters - and we can all benefit from learning from the gardening skills it takes to enable a healthy native, perennial display (as oppose to easy wins earns from planting more 'showy' annuals). I look forward to seeing these displays mature and thrive."

Support for Local Businesses

The application process for ARG3 has now been launched so that the remaining £1.4m will be paid out by the deadline date of 30 June.

Discretionary Restart Grant (ARG3)

Eligible businesses

Funding is available for businesses which have been significantly impacted by the period of national restrictions from 1 April 2021, and which are ineligible to apply for the [Restart Grant](#) scheme. This scheme supports two categories of businesses:

1. *Businesses which were legally required to close during this period of national restrictions and which are not registered for business rates ([see the list of businesses required to close](#)); and*
2. *Businesses which were not required to close during this period (rated or non-rated), but which were still severely impacted*

Ineligible businesses

The following businesses will not be eligible for the scheme:

1. *Businesses which can obtain a [Restart Grant](#)*
2. *Businesses which have already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of subsidy permitted*
3. *Businesses that were in administration, insolvent, where a striking-off notice had been made or were not engaged in business activity prior to the 5th January 2021*
4. *'Home sharing' businesses, buy to let properties and premises that are used for personal use only (for example, riding stables)*

Thanks are due to all the staff involved who have dealt with all the various grants and deadline dates with great efficiency as demonstrated by the 97% approval rate for the applications received. This is a tally of grants paid out so far:

Grant name /period	Applications received	Approved	Total paid	Pending	Rejected
Restart Grants 01 April	1683	1576	11,876,767	0	65
National restrictions LRSG (C) Addendum 16 February -	1,688	1,688	4,183,104	4	7
National restrictions LRSG (C) Addendum & CBLP 5 January -	1,796	1,713	12,104,393	0	71
Tier 2/Tier 3 2 Dec to 4 Jan LRSG (O)	975	771	921,969	0	30
Special cases	20	20	715,000		
LRSG (C)		465	156,890	0	122
Christmas support payment –Wet Led pubs	67	62	62,000	0	6
Additional Restrictions Grant - January restrictions	392	392	2,310,042		
National restrictions – 5 November to 1 December LRSG (C) Addendum	1,881	1,693	2,541,580	66	15
Additional Restrictions Grant - November restrictions	144	137	134,950		
Small Business Rate Relief Grant	2,925	2,759	27,590,000		
Retail Hospitality & Leisure Grant	963	926	15,365,000		
Discretionary	329	299	2,310,000		
Total	12,863	12,501	80,271,695		

DCC Vaccine updates

Positive cases of coronavirus remain stable in Devon, with the county's rates of eight cases per 100,000 population being well below England's average of 21 positive cases per 100,000.

We are still experiencing isolated outbreaks in some settings, but with little evidence of the virus transmitting within those local communities. Rates are currently highest in the South Hams area. Although positive cases range across broad age groups in Devon, case rates are currently highest among our youngest population, 0 to 19 year olds.

Free Testing Kits

DCC go on to stress the importance of using free testing kits even if you have had both vaccinations because you can still have CV-19 without symptoms and thus be able to spread it around. You can collect free tests from the Boots at Woolbrook and also according to the DCC website at the Beacon Medical Centre, Sidmouth.

Most vulnerable offered second dose of COVID-19 vaccine earlier to help protect against variants

Second doses of the COVID-19 vaccination are being offered to the most vulnerable people earlier as part of the government's plans to tackle rising cases of the B.1.617.2 variant of concern, first identified in India.

Appointments for a second dose of a vaccine will be brought forward from twelve to eight weeks for people aged over 50 years old, frontline health and social care workers and people who are in at-risk groups ([vaccination priority groups one to nine](#)).

The news follows updated [advice from the independent experts at the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#). They have considered the latest available evidence on the variant and recommended reducing the dosing interval to help ensure people across the UK have the strongest possible protection from the virus at an earlier opportunity.

Residents in [vaccination priority groups one to nine](#), who have an appointment before Tuesday 25 May should attend as planned. Those with later appointments will be contacted as soon as possible to make new arrangements. There is no need to contact your GP or vaccination centre, please be patient and wait for them to contact you.

People who used the [National Booking Service](#) will receive a text message prompting them to cancel their existing second appointment and rebook an earlier one. There are currently plenty of appointments available and new appointments are being added regularly, so please keep checking.

Those not in [vaccination priority groups one to nine](#) will continue to get their first dose, with their second dose at 12 weeks in line with the current vaccine strategy.

Let's talk about apps!

There are reports this week about the NHS app and why it's especially important to people wanting to travel abroad, because it will document whether you have received both doses of a coronavirus vaccine.

The NHS app is not a new app - it's the same app that people are already able to use to book doctor's appointments and order repeat prescriptions.

But it's now also able to show if you're fully vaccinated against coronavirus. In fact, the app has two new options, to share your COVID-19 status and check your COVID-19 vaccine record.

This development is really important for travellers because some countries make proof of vaccination one of the requirements before entry. [You can download the NHS app via the NHS website.](#)

Separately, and not to be confused with the NHS app, the NHS COVID-19 app is a different app that we are all still encouraged to use when 'checking in' at locations and venues.

The NHS COVID-19 app is the 'track and trace' app. This is the app that we are encouraged to use to scan the QR codes at doors or entrances of pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops. The purpose of this is so that, should you be in close vicinity of someone who tests positive for coronavirus while you're out and about, you'll get a notification about it with further advice of what to do next.

The NHS COVID-19 app is still important because it helps us break the chain of infection by advising people to get tested and to self-isolate pending the result, should they have been in close enough contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. [You can download the NHS COVID-19 app via the NHS website.](#)

Exmouth Ring and Ride Service

The parish council every year makes a donation to the Exmouth Ring and Ride service. Before lockdown the service served Newton Poppleford for shopping trips and outings. This is what the website says:

Do you have problems accessing public transport? You may qualify to use the Ring & Ride service, or the Budleigh Community Bus. The Community Bus service allows anyone unable to use public transport e.g. people of any age with temporary mobility problems or the elderly, disabled, lone parents & young people especially from rural area, special social clubs, education/training, shopping & youth activities in the local towns.

You can even bring a friend or relative to assist you if required.

Exmouth Ring & Ride are proud to have been serving and helping people from the East Devon area for over 20 years. We are a registered charity, which provides a much used transport service to enable people to maintain their independence.

Contact us

By telephone : 01395 26 66 62

Office opening hours are Monday to Friday 10am to 1:30pm

Local issues

Our local PP3 footpaths warden Ted Swan is fitting a hand-rail to the steps that lead down from footpath 1 to School Lane. Ted works single-handedly and relentlessly on a voluntary basis to keep our footpaths clear, walkable and in good repair. We are so fortunate to have him.

The parish Council has now installed new play equipment in Turner Close play area, paid for out of S106 funds which developers have to pay when building new houses in our parish.

A bug hotel has been planted on Webbers Meadow and where trees have been trimmed back, log stacks have been formed to form wildlife habitats.

Harpford Village Hall had a spring clean on 15th May in readiness for opening for craft afternoons and other bookings.

The Pavilion has had an upgrade and will now have full Wifi installed to make it a more desirable events option.

Notice about 4 Burrow Lane Newton Poppleford

This is just a polite reminder that the new owner of the above property is making her garden dog proof. The previous owner was happy for anyone to walk through her garden as a short cut to the bus stop on the A3052.

There is no Public Right of Way through her garden and on the grounds of safety is no longer possible.

The new owner does not wish to be seen as unfriendly but just wants to secure and enjoy her new home without strangers walking past the windows and through the garden. I am sure most people will appreciate the situation.

The parish council is continuing to investigate moving the bus stops to a safer area nearby.

20 mph speed limit for Newton Poppleford

I have written to the recently re-elected Cllr Stuart Hughes of Devon County Council querying why we have to wait for the results of the pilot scheme in Newton Abbot before implementing a consultation about introducing a reduced speed limit through Newton Poppleford. After all both Sidford and Topsham have 20 mph speed limits and are far more similar to our village than Newton Abbot. This was his response:

As you are aware, the introduction of new 20mph speed limits is currently on hold. In December 2019 a Speed Management Working Group (SMWG) was established, comprising of Elected Members, Devon County Council Road Safety, Neighbourhood Highways and Traffic Officers, Public Health and Communications Team representatives and Police Road Casualty Reduction and Traffic Management Officers. Whilst an area of their focus is the trial you referred to which is currently taking place in Newton Abbott, with a view to informing future policy on 20 mph speed limits, the policy review is also considering many other aspects such as the environmental and social impacts of traffic speed. The lockdown has inevitably caused issues with the availability of reliable traffic data which has delayed the completion of the trial.

Our team continue to investigate and respond as appropriate to incidents which occur on the network with the support of our colleagues in the Police.

His response doesn't really answer the questions I asked.

A resident wrote to me to say his daughter had been struck and injured by the wing mirror of a car as she walked to the school bus. The family live on the High Street where pavements are either narrow or non-existent. They also cycle a younger child to nursery every morning and are only too aware of the dangers of traffic. We had the tragic death of Mr Cooper last December at the traffic lights. There are numerous cases of injuries from traffic in the High Street, not to mention near misses at the lights where motorists simply fail to stop at all even when the lights are red. Just what are DCC waiting for, before they take action.

It is also interesting to note that Sidford had a zebra crossing installed just a few years ago, something else that DCC are not generally in favour of. Could it possibly be a co-incidence that Sidford is in Cllr Hughes own patch?

Speed and damage to our historic buildings

A resident pointed out that large lorries and speeding traffic is damaging the fabric of our older buildings and another spoke of the issues of exiting roads such as Parson's Close at the western end of the village as drives accelerate away from the roundabout. There is so much support for the 20 mph speed limit we wish to have imposed in our village, we really need to push harder for this.

Double white lining on Four Elms Hill

New date set of 5th-9th July. Allegedly.

Flooding Sunday 16th May 2021

There was some flash flooding in the village last weekend. This certainly brought out community spirit in Harpford where the water and mud arrived in a rush in the early afternoon. The problem was exacerbated by the fact the ditches hadn't been routinely cleared out despite requests.

Lucky for us several residents reported the problem and a local based team had the road cleared using heavy machinery and removing several lorry loads of silt in the next 48 hours and the ditches finally cleared out so hopefully prevent further incidents.

Complaints

Householder fitted a post onto the highway.

Shortly after the new double yellow lines were put down at the entrance to Millmoor Lane this new post appeared. This was reported to DCC and removed the same day by our local Highways Officer with advice given to the builder who installed it.

Streetlight in Turner Close

A streetlight has now been broken in Turner Close for over a year, a resident has tried unsuccessfully since March 2020 to get this repaired with a bit of a battle going on between EDDC and DCC over who is responsible for its repair. I am now chasing this up.



Slow speed of home improvements to Council property

I was contacted in a roundabout fashion about the poor state of a council home a new resident was about to move into. The council has a duty to hand over a home in a fit state of repair but this was not the case for her. Unfortunately I was unaware of the problem which has now turned into a major issue. It has raised some concerns about the firm who are contracted to carry out the repairs. This will need further investigation.

Parking on Zig Zag lines by the traffic lights

There have been complaints about customers parking on the Zig Zag lines by the traffic lights since the new TACO shop has opened. This is a parking violation and drivers who park on them are liable to receive a ticket. The local police suggest if you see this you could report it on the 101 phone number (good luck with that unless you have a lot of spare time on your hands) or you can complete an online form by searching for Sidmouth Neighbourhood Police Team or your complaint could be emailed in to the Sidmouth Neighbourhood Policing Team on:

101_e@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Horse riders and private land

A horse rider allegedly claimed they were entitled under the 'right to roam' to ride their horse over private farm land. I am sure that most horse riders are more responsible and fully aware that this is not allowed. We are fortunate to have the permitted riding we have in this area and should not abuse this privilege by behaving in a way that gives all horse riders a bad name.

Complaints about motorcycling using the green lanes recklessly in Venn Ottery.

The police have investigated this. Their approach is to engage and educate riders to behave responsibly.

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

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

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