



# NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2015



Available on the website: [www.newtonpopplefordpc.co.uk](http://www.newtonpopplefordpc.co.uk)

Collect your own from boxes on Parish Council Noticeboards.

Emailed quarterly by sending a request to: [newtonpopplefordcouncilnews@gmail.com](mailto:newtonpopplefordcouncilnews@gmail.com)

### END OF TERM FOR COUNCILLORS

The General Election will be held on 7th May; at the same time, elections in East Devon will also be held for District and Parish Councillors.

If you are not already on the Register of Electors then you should register as soon as possible. Note that being registered to pay council tax does NOT automatically put you on the Electoral Roll, and it is a legal requirement to register, even if you do not exercise your right to vote. **Latest date for registering to vote is Monday 20th April.**

If you wish to become a councillor (at any level) it is important to note that the councillor's duty is to represent the best overall interests of the area - not just the views of vocal pressure groups. If you wish to stand for election there is a strict timetable to be followed: **all nomination papers for the parish and district elections must be delivered to the local authority (EDDC) by 4.00pm on Thursday 9th April.** Full details of candidate requirements, timing, **the forms** to be completed etc. can be obtained from EDDC or downloaded from:

[www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk)

Forms to stand as a candidate for Parish Council can also be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

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### WHAT DO COUNCILLORS DO?

There's all the basic and obvious tasks, such as attending meetings, checking minutes, and discussing issues with local people. However in addition to these our councillors should expect to put their own time and effort into local projects. What each councillor does will vary according to their interests and abilities; some examples of what our parish councillors do behind the scenes include:

- Using own equipment to install gates or posts for parish benefit (such as on Webbers Meadow).
- Undertaking professional jobs at cost, e.g. clearing lanes, ditches, pathways etc.
- Copying and organising parish records to ensure there are backup copies of important documents etc.
- Delivering leaflets on behalf of the council.
- Liaising with local groups about issues that might affect them.

- Visiting sites of planning applications before these are discussed at council.
- Researching information on topics that are to be discussed at council meetings.
- Discussing issues with the Clerk.

In most parishes, councillors are also responsible for specific aspects of council matters such as property maintenance, liaison with utility providers, obtaining quotes for work etc.

It might surprise some people how much time our councillors might put in outside the scheduled meetings, and it becomes very noticeable that not all councillors are willing to participate and will only attend the bare minimum of meetings, sometimes not even reading documents in advance to keep up to date with council matters.

On the positive side, as a Parish Councillor you will be consulted by EDDC on local planning applications, usually hear early about issues that might affect the locality and its residents on many topics, have the opportunity to be a spokesperson when appropriate - and in general be involved to represent your friends and neighbours.

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### WHY BE A COUNCILLOR? PROS & CONS

People become parish councillors for a variety of reasons. At the time of the last election (in 2011) not enough people submitted nomination papers so those who did were elected unopposed, and for 3 years there were vacancies; since then the empty seats have been filled by co-option. Don't let this happen again - election is always better than co-option.

So why do people become parish councillors? In some councillors' own words:

*"I wanted to put my experience and background to use in the community where I live. It has been a real eye-opener in terms of the issues that you need to deal with e.g. footpaths, developments, cemeteries, budgets and plenty more! I've always found it interesting, maybe a bit tense sometimes..., but on the whole it is fulfilling to engage with people and try to do something about the issues that arise."*

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## WHY BE A COUNCILLOR? PROS & CONS (Cont'd)

"I stood for parish councillor as I had view on what I thought would help the parish, and if you don't get involved and put your backside on a seat, you don't have room to moan about the ones that do. It's a thankless task being a parish councillor most of the time, as you try to think of the parish as a whole and what would benefit the whole community the most, but as in all things you also upset a few, which can lead to people you were once friends with no longer talking to you as your view is not as theirs and you're on the council, but in fact you have not changed personally, you're just on the council. If it was the same view as they had you would be the best thing since sliced bread. On an up note it's good when we achieve something that helps our community, that otherwise would not or may not have happened. Most residents of the parish don't realise also how much time you give up (free of charge as we all do it voluntarily; only the Clerk gets paid), and the work that goes into being a parish councillor between the monthly meetings."

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"I have been asked to say why I volunteered to become a councillor. The answer is simply that I have always been interested in what is happening in my local community and to become involved if possible. For example, I had the privilege of chairing a village hall committee for 12 years and was involved in building a new hall. Being a councillor is time-consuming but often rewarding by helping people navigate their way through bureaucracy and sometimes contributing to the decision-making process."

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"I became a councillor after attending parish council meetings for several years and subsequently being co-opted by the parish council. I agreed to join as I felt I wanted to put something back into the community by way of offering my time and labour. I will admit however that I did not appreciate how much time it would take up. In particular after meetings. Most of the time, it was fulfilling however of late things became very personal over the King Alfred Way Development, although not against me personally, but some of my fellow councillors. I was very disappointed to see and hear actions and comments made by various members of the public and one councillor at our monthly meetings. This unfortunately made the last year very disrupted within the council and I feel things suffered as a result. Still things move on and progress has been made on several issues and will continue to do so. If anyone feels that they have something to contribute, then by all means put your name forward, hopefully the next 4 years will not be as hard going as the last year."

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"When approached to see if I would be interested in joining the Parish council around 10 years ago I was initially reluctant, what convinced me to get involved was the lack of affordable housing in the parish and the limited employment opportunities.

In the last 10 years we have a number of false starts with affordable housing but the King Alfred Way development will go some way to providing much needed affordable housing in our community, we have a number of small businesses operating in the parish but it would be good to see more employment opportunities particularly for the younger members of the community.

As a Parish Councillor I have taken a stand against development in the flood plain but have been frustrated that the Environment Agency and the District Council repeatedly ignore their own advice when determining planning applications.

Although we have some good sports and recreation facilities in the parish we lack indoor facilities and facilities for teenagers, we have had some false starts with youth clubs and BMX facilities it would be good to see something more long lasting and maybe sometime in the future an indoor facility.

As a Councillor it is important that you listen to the views of the community and represent the majority rather than sometimes the very vocal few.

Whether a Councillor or as a resident I intend to continue to take an active voluntary role in preserving and enhancing our community."

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## PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE

Setting up the Finance Committee for the Parish Council (Chaired by Councillor Ed Slattery) has meant the Council has invested more time and effort into getting the Council's accounts in better order. The precept (amount raised through Council Tax) for 2015-2016 was agreed at £37,500 - no increase on the previous year. A number of uncertainties will need to be managed during the year including; any maintenance that arises and if any responsibilities are passed on from the District Council to the Parish Council. In the meantime the Parish Council aim to pay off some of the loan that was used to buy Webber's Meadow and upgrade the Pavilion.

Grass cutting is an area of significant expenditure in the budget and has now been mostly (with the exception of the cricket field) drawn into one contract which is out for tender. The new tender will include doubling the number of cuts made to Webber's meadow – though we

will have to keep watch on the weather to see how that goes!

To tentatively raise additional income, the Council has offered businesses to advertise (full page) on the Parish web site for £20 per year. This could also include events, service and courses. Charity and not-for-profit organisations would be able to advertise for no charge.

*Hazel Jeffery* - Chairman of the PC

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### **Consultation: Public Transport Review**

Devon County Council is (as ever) looking for ways to cut costs. Various consultations are under way but note that they are currently looking at **ways to save £1.7M on the public transport budget** over the next 2 years.

The consultation is on-line and can be found at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/consultations/public-transport-review/>

End date is 20th April 2015.

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### **SECTION 106 FUNDS**

A meeting was held between the Parish Council and EDDC concerning Section 106 Money (money paid into a community fund by developers).

The current money held for the Parish amounts to £12,166.13 which is allocated as follows: £10,057.52 for Play and £2,108.61 for Sport. The Parish recently purchased safety netting for the children's play area from the fund and we will now start looking to create a new project. Residents are asked to submit any ideas for new projects to the Parish Clerk; your suggestions must relate to Play or Sport as this is the current scope for spending. At present adult gym equipment and indoor sports/play equipment have been suggested. Once we have received sufficient ideas from the public, a public meeting will be held to vote on the suggestions.

Under the new rules that will start in April 2015, new Section 106 money can be spent on a much broader scope. This could cover areas like allotments, footpaths etc. the Parish will attend a meeting on 4th March at EDDC for an update on the changes coming forward. The biggest change is that any small developments i.e.: 3-4 houses, the developer will not have to contribute to the community as they do at present.

A formal notice regarding projects will be issued at a later date.

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## **GRASS CUTTING IN CEMETERIES**

The parish council pays a contractor to cut the grass in the cemeteries, and these costs have increased over the years. Residents are reminded that local rules for the cemeteries require burial plots to be kept level with the ground (not mounded up) allowing the mowing machines easy access.

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### **RED BRIDGE, HARPFORD**

*(Paraphrased from letter from the Environment Agency:)*  
At this location on the designated 'Main' River Otter, the Environment Agency acts as the flood risk management authority through regulating works carried out in the river and adjoining floodplain. The EA has no plans to undertake work at this location for flood risk management purposes, so their involvement would solely be to regulate any works proposed by either riparian owners (i.e. landowners) or other bodies taking an interest.

The EA would be happy to provide comments on any proposed works, with a view to formally considering them through the flood defence consent process, but at this stage is not resourced to attend a meeting to look for a constructive outcome. They recommend that a consultant engineer is engaged to consider the options available and then present them to the EA for further consideration.

It would appear that there are conflicts between a number of interested parties at the location and it is not the role of the EA to get involved in such matters. It is noted that a number of EA officers and advisors have already provided advice on the erosion concerns and it is hoped that this information can be used to influence any future plans.

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### **LOCAL HISTORY GROUP MEMORABILIA AND PHOTOS WANTED**

The Local History Group is getting on with sorting and organising the old photos and documents that have so far been collected.

A village archive of old photos, documents, memories etc. is being developed and this is where your help is needed. **Do you have any old photos of or documents about** the area, the buildings, the people, events, sports teams, organisations, activities, or whatever? If you do we would like to borrow and scan them to store in the archive. Your photos or documents will

be carefully handled, scanned into computer files, and returned to you unscathed.

Please contact Shân Merritt on 01404 812733 to organise loan, collection etc.

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### NEXT BLOOD DONOR SESSIONS

Next sessions will be held as follows:

Ottery Football Club	17/4/15
Sidmouth, Stowford Centre.	27/3/15 & 3/4/15
Bud Salt'n Public Hall	3/6/15

Book your appointment on-line at [blood.co.uk](http://blood.co.uk) or by telephone: **0300 123 23 23**

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### DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

EDDC has commissioned 2 reports to help with understanding the economy of moving to new headquarters (1 with external auditors and 1 with its internal auditors). The findings will be debated at meetings at The Knowle on 11th and 12th March and a decision taken at Full Council on Wednesday 25th March.

I do hope you have registered to vote at May's national, district and parish elections. If you have not, go online to [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) or ring The Knowle and ask for help.

On Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February, the Leader of the Council announced that East Devon's council tax will stay at the 2009 level. The District Council's precept remains frozen for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row, while efficiencies keep vital services running. The whole of the Budget speech can be seen on the EDDC website (under 'News').

This will be my last contribution to the quarterly Newsletter. I have enjoyed my 8 years as your District Councillor and, in particular, working closely with the Parish Council. Newton Poppleford & Harpford is a beautiful part of beautiful East Devon and, when I see pictures of the terrible things that are happening in so many places around the world, I realise how fortunate we are.

*Ken Potter* - District Councillor



### COUNCILLORS AS AT MARCH 2015

Name	Tel.	Address	Ward
<b>PARISH COUNCILLORS</b>			
Jean Clarke	01395 568815	Thornlea, Exeter Rd, Newton Pop EX10 0BJ	N Pop
Maureen Cook	01395 568348	24 Littledown Orchard, Newton Pop EX10 0BQ	N Pop
Dave Jeffery	01395 568897	Old Orchard, Burrow EX10 0BP	N Pop
George Pearce	01395 568571	25 Turner Close, Newton Pop EX10 0EN	N Pop
Graham Salter	01395 519399	Little Shule, Farthings Lane, High Street EX10 0BU	N Pop
Ed Slattery	01395 567111	7 Down Close, Newton Pop, EX10 0JD	N Pop
Hazel Jeffery - Chairman	01395 567821	The Stables, Hoppins, Southerton, EX11 1SD	Harpford
Bill Phillips	01395 567786	7 Chestnut Way, Newton Poppleford EX10	Harpford
Val Ranger	01395 568460	Coombe Down, Lower Way, Harpford EX10 0NQ	Harpford
Makala Tillotson	01395 567961	Badger Close Newton Pop EX10	Harpford
Chris Cole - Vice Chair	01395 567621	Court Barn, Southerton EX11 1SE	Venn Ottery
<b>County Cllr</b> Christine Channon	01395 442927	12 Cricket Field Court, Cricket Field Lane, Budleigh Salterton	N/A
<b>District Cllr</b> Ken Potter	01395 567147	Bayford Lodge, Exmouth Road, Newton Pop	N/A
<b>Clerk to Council</b> David Atkins	01395 264003	Potters, Lympstone Hill, Exmouth EX8 5AF <a href="mailto:parishclerk@newtonpopplefordpc.co.uk">parishclerk@newtonpopplefordpc.co.uk</a>	N/A
<b>Local Police Officers</b> PC Dave Wallace PCSOs Chris Bolsover & Steve Blanchford-Cox	101	Our beat Officers can be contacted by email on <a href="mailto:sidmouth@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk">sidmouth@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk</a>	N/A
<b>Website &amp; Newsletter</b> Shân Merritt	01404 812733	Venn Ottery Barton, Venn Ottery, EX11 1RZ <a href="mailto:webmaint@newtonpopplefordpc.co.uk">webmaint@newtonpopplefordpc.co.uk</a>	N/A
<b>Village Hall booking</b>	01395 568571	Janey Drake	N/A
<b>Pavilion</b> - David Zirker	01395 567430	Brookfields, Venn Ottery Rd.	N/A

**The Parish Council meets monthly, with additional or interim meetings as necessary. The monthly meetings are held on the last Monday of each month - check noticeboards/website for details and agendas. Correspondence should normally be addressed to the Clerk to the Council.**