

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

The civic year has not seen much progress. The East Devon District Plan is still being negotiated with residents and the Inspector. The main problem seems to be how many houses should be built over the next 20 years and where to put them. It is anticipated that the Plan will be approved and adopted early in 2015.

Newton Poppleford & Harpford Parish Council has had a very busy year, which has attracted a great deal of public interest. The Clinton Devon Estates' application to build up to 40 houses, doctor's surgery and associated infrastructure south of King Alfred Way has caused much head scratching. EDDC gave its consent to the proposal in September of last year but Newton Poppleford opponents to the application made a successful legal challenge. EDDC considered the proposal again in May of this year and it was approved for a second time. The main benefits include the provision of 16 much needed affordable homes, £25,000 towards upgrading footpath 1 and, of course, a new branch doctors' surgery (which will comply with the most recent regulations).

Another major concern for the Parish is the future of the car park off School Lane. EDDC has offered the car park to the Parish Council free of charge but, if the offer is not accepted, EDDC will "consider its options"! The average cost of maintenance over the last 8 years has been in the region of £1,360 per annum. The car park is a valuable asset and I hope every endeavour will be made to keep it for the future.

It is also unfortunate that the Harpford Hall is no longer available for community use. The current owners have indicated that it is going to be sold and for a sum which is probably more than the local community can afford.

Let us hope that the new civic year will be more positive.