



## Ward Cllrs Annual Report 2016 - 2017

I have found this year challenging with a continuing lack of transparency, accountability and democracy at EDDC. There are still far too many decisions agreed behind closed doors which are then 'consulted upon' after the decision has been made, this is not only about the public not being consulted but also about councillors not being consulted. It is the process which is the concern as much as the decision.

The culture of rewarding councillors and former councillors who support this approach to continues unabated.

EDDC still has no policy on Consultation, preferring instead to use a 'guide for manager' which of course can then be disregarded completely. One However, I will continue to push for this.

I have found a great number of officers at EDDC very helpful and supportive and sympathetic to the plight some residents find themselves in. It is sometimes a question of finding out who that person is, and that sometimes takes tenacity.

Planning – We must be sure we never to allow this village to be caught out again as a victim of EDDC not having a 5/6 year land supply and thus have totally inappropriate development thrust upon us.

The Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) could be a further threat to this area. On the one hand it purports to be able to protect villages by focussing development in strategic places yet owing to the loose wording in the East Devon Local Plan the A3052 corridor is still vulnerable due to the influence of major landowners within this area. Once again I fear we will be 'consulted' once the decisions have been taken. I do urge everyone to respond to consultations and I will do my best to keep residents informed of the progress. In terms of hierarchy the GESP sits above the Devon Minerals Plans and the East Devon Local Plan jointly, and then Neighbourhood Plans sit below those two policies.

Venn Ottery Quarry – It is good to see the restoration continuing, Aggregate Industries have been really supportive in ensuring we are left with a good legacy for wildlife and that our new bridle path is left in a good state of repair. All the staff involved have been great ambassadors for Aggregate Industries. Thanks to our former DCC councillor Christine Channon for chairing the Quarry Liaison Group so effectively.

Villages Plan - I largely supported what is proposed for Newton Poppleford in the Villages Plan and the BUAB. Development can take place outside of that with evidence based housing needs survey to ensure that appropriate housing is built for residents of Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish.

Neighbourhood Plan – the findings of the whole village survey are very much in line with the whole village survey of 2010 so it will be good for these views finally to be given legal weight. The Steering Group are benefitting from the experience of other villages who have been through the process and are learning from problems they have faced when their plan comes to be inspected. Thanks to Emma Coppell for all your work co-ordinating the Steering Group.

Working partnerships: I look forward to working with our new Devon County Councillor Claire Wright and to continue working with fellow Parish Councillors for another year. With a new Clerk who has the IT skills and comprehensive knowledge of legislation and finance required for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Parish Council should now be able to carry out its statutory duties far more effectively and keep our website updated to help inform residents of our actions. Thanks to Parish Council Chairman Hazel Jeffery who has worked so hard behind the scenes this year particularly when we were without a Clerk. Thanks to Ted Swan who does a fantastic job in keeping our footpaths clear and usable and protecting our countryside. Last but not most definitely not least I would like to thank all the residents and volunteers who work so tirelessly in this village to make it such a special place to live.