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# Neighbourhood Plan Consultation closed on 14th December 2019

Thank you to all residents who either responded by email or in person to the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation; many useful comments were received. We enjoyed meeting and talking to everyone who attended the open events in person. Comments will now be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan document before it goes back to EDDC and out to the statutory consultees for the final time. My thanks to the amazing Gill Cameron-Webb for organising these public events and for visiting so many clubs and societies to spread the word.

# Delay to the Sale of the Knowle

You may have read in the Sidmouth Herald that at the last Full Council meeting on 18th December 2019 the Leader announced that Lifestory Group Ltd (formerly known as Pegasus Life) had failed to complete on the sale of the Knowle which was due to happen that day. This was a breach of contract; Liefstory Group were asking for an extension to the deadline. EDDC has now started legal proceedings to secure the agreed and contracted £9M payment along with any associated costs and damages.

# Redundant post at EDDC

We were informed in early December by the Chief Executive that the post of Deputy Chief Executive at EDDC was to be made redundant ‘to help to balance the budget’. This raised some interesting questions. As I understand it the post holder was specifically brought in to oversee the relocation of EDDC offices from the Knowle to Honiton (see above). You will recall the promise was that this would be ‘cost neutral’ and that particular objective has clearly failed massively. More worryingly the post holder just last year was given ‘delegated responsibility’ to spend up to £20million to invest in commercial property (in £5M chunks) on behalf of the council. I raised concerns about this, given the record of the post-holder in being at least £10M out on his relocation finances and querying if this was a safe decision. I was told that the reason I found this worrying was because ‘I didn’t understand his role’ and that the need to be able to sign a contract quickly in a commercial market was entirely necessary. I found this even more worrying…

The next question that needs to be answered is will the post-holder be paid to leave with another of the infamous EDDC ‘non-disclosure’ agreements and golden goodbyes? In these times of austerity and given that the post always had a finite life, it would seem inappropriate if that was the case. Questions will no doubt be asked over the next few weeks.

# King Alfred Gate – planning appeal against EDDC’s decision to defer a decision on their application to build two new houses instead of the doctors surgery.

The Planning Inspectorate upheld Clinton Devon Estates appeal and awarded them full costs against East Devon District Council to CDE now have full permission to build two large houses on the site instead of the doctors surgery that they promised and used to persuade former planning committee members that the site was brining ‘community benefit’. Objectors always knew how this would play out.

# King Alfred Gate – lack of parking and pavements.

I have queried with EDDC Senior Planning Officers whether the roads and pavements of this site comply with legal requirements given that most residents park on the pavement either fully or partially because the roads are just not wide enough for two vehicles to pass if they park on the road. I also queried if the garage doors are wide enough to enable modern cars to access the garage spaces. I followed this up with senior planning officers who said the roads were ‘built to plan’ and they were not going to follow this up with DCC Highways. Further information next time.

# Car Parking Task and Finish Forum (TAFF)

I am on the car parking which was formed as part of Scrutiny after Cabinet suggested all free car parks in East Devon should now charge residents to park in them. The EDDC officer and Chairman were fully supportive of recommendations to support continued free parking in **Broadclyst** based on the community benefit it provided even if this was at a small cost to the council. However, when it came to Newton Poppleford the EDDC officer was determined that this should be a paying car park. The Chairman supported this. I asked the Chairman to articulate the difference between community benefit for Broadclyst and for Newton Poppleford however he was unable to do this. Fortunately there was full support from all TAFF members across all the political parties that the villages should all be dealt with in the same way. Thus they also supported continued free parking in the tiny car park in Sidbury (15 spaces), and in Jarvis Road, Littleham (12 spaces). These are only recommendations to Cabinet and it is possible Cabinet will ignore these but it is hopeful that the TAFF committee were so united. Over the course of the next few meetings the TAFF are going to review the towns and car parks in chunks of around 10 per evening.

# Pavement parking and parking on double yellow lines in Newton Poppleford

Residents are now taking the matter into their own hands, photographing the cars that blatantly park on pavements meaning that pedestrians cannot get by safely and reporting offenders directly to DCC. I think parking enforcement officers will also be encouraged to come to Newton Poppleford and issue tickets to those who flaunt the double yellow lines on a daily basis, especially in Meadow Drive.

# Christmas Recycling information

* Plain wrapping paper and cards can go in the paper recycling box
* Wrapping paper with glitter, foil or plastic cannot be recycled in your paper box and must go into your large black refuse bin. Putting them in the paper recycling can contaminate the whole load.
* Polystyrene cannot be recycled easily and needs to go in the black refuse bin.
* Additional recycling – if your recycling bin is overflowing put additional recycling in a box or bag beside it.

# EDDC Christmas tree recycling – our closest sites and events are:

* Ottery St Mary on Land of Canaan Car Park Tuesday 7th January 12.30 – 2.30 pm
* Sidmouth Manor Car Park Wednesday 8th January 8.30 am to 12pm.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a happy and healthy 2020.

Val Ranger

Ward councillor Newton Poppleford and Harpford

Email [vranger@btinternet.com](mailto:vranger@btinternet.com) Mobile 07475 201 340