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## Council Tax for 2020/2021

EDDC Full Council – all members will be voting on Council Tax increases on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February. The link is here to for the full reports:

<https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/g240/Public%20reports%20pack%2026th-Feb-2020%2017.30%20Council.pdf?T=10>

The Town & Parish Council Precepts for 2020/21 total £4,258,412.59. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish councils is 3.86% and results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £70.81 for 2020/21.

Devon County Council set their precept at £86,570,563.86. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,439.46. This is a total increase of 3.99%; includes a charge for adult social care services representing 2% of the increase.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall set their precept at £13,329,651.24. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £221.64, being a 4.41% increase on the previous year.

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority set their precept at £5,306,841.84. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £88.24, being a 1.99% increase on the previous year.

Here is a brief summary:

- 1.3 This recommendation is reflected in the formal Council Tax Resolution at Appendix A and the total Band D Council Tax will be as follows:

<b>COUNCIL TAX LEVIES</b>	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>Variation</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>%</b>
East Devon District Council	141.78	146.78	3.53%
Parish & Town Councils (Average)	68.18	70.81	3.86%
Sub Total	209.96	217.59	-
Devon County Council	1,384.29	1,439.46*	3.99%
Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall	212.28	221.64	4.41%
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	86.52	88.24	1.99%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£1,893.05</b>	<b>£1,966.93</b>	<b>3.90%</b>

\* This increase of 3.99% includes a charge for adult social care services representing 2% of the increase.

## Fireworks, Lanterns and Drones

A Notice of Motion (an item for discussion and subsequent vote) has been put forward for the 26th February Full Council Meeting.

That this Council agrees to:

- a) request the organisers of all public firework displays within East Devon, of which the Council is aware or becomes aware, to advertise them in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people; (Newton Popleford and Harpford Parish Council have always done this for their displays)
- b) continue to support public awareness about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;
- c) write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90 decibels for those sold to the public for private displays;
- d) encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public use; and
- e) recommends that Cabinet adapts the Drone Policy so as to prohibit;
  - i. the release of lanterns from EDDC property and land
  - ii. the release of any firework (above 90db) from EDDC land.

I fully support the above and I am sure it would have the support of many residents.

## Tree Planting

A number of residents contacted me about the need for more tree planting on EDDC owned land, this is also something that has a lot of support. There are small steps being taken in the district, for example in February, local people planted 500 trees including native oak trees to create a Cranbrook Canopy, helping to make Cranbrook a better place for people and wildlife. I note also that Sidmouth Aboretum, Sidmouth Town Councillors and volunteers are planting trees at Bowd which you may already have noticed and having already planted some trees there a new community orchard is

being planted close to Stowford Community Centre. Newton Poppleford Parish Council also has plans to plant more trees in addition to those already planted for example on Venn Ottery Green. I hope we will see many more instances of tree planting in the near future. We are losing so many trees through disease or convenience felling and desperately need them to counteract the pollution as the population expands locally through more houses being built, more cars on the road and the air pollution this brings.

## Holocaust Memorial Day

I attended this event in Honiton at EDDC headquarters. Richard Halsey, the President of Exeter Synagogue, was welcomed to the council's headquarters for a special tree planting ceremony to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, which takes place every year on 27 January – the day that Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp, was liberated.

A silver birch tree was planted in front of Blackdown House as Mr Halsey recited the Kaddish Prayer and also a special Holocaust Memorial Day flag was raised to mark the occasion, witnessed by members of the Exeter Synagogue and East Devon councillors.

Cllr Stuart Hughes and Cllr Paul Jarvis, who lost members of his own family in the Holocaust, both spoke about the importance of the event, which bears witness for those who endured genocide, and honours the survivors and all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition.

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust encourages remembrance in a world scarred by genocide. It promotes and supports Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) – the international day on 27 January to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed under Nazi Persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It was a very moving event followed by an absolutely delicious vegan buffet to follow provided by the Accidental Vegan Café in Honiton.

## EDDC live Consultations

### [‘Careful Choices’ Consultation on services](#)

EDDC's 'Careful choices' policy is about achieving a shared understanding of the services which the council has to provide even though the Government is no longer funding them. It is also about protecting as far as possible other services which people care most about. The council is asking for your views to help inform decision making by the council by completing a questionnaire about their services and the consultation is available to complete on the EDDC

- [Have your say on EDDC services in their Careful Choices questionnaire until 5pm on 9 March 2020.](#)

EDDC say they have already taken significant steps to deal with the reductions in their finances; compared with 10 years ago, they've reduced the cost of running services by a total of £4.4 million. They say they are making progress towards bridging the funding gap by:

- actively assessing commercial investment opportunities and ways we can create income from the assets we own; (this includes the deeply unpopular suggestion of raising car parking charges in some car parks for example and some very concerning plans to invest in commercial property via a very small team at EDDC who have delegated authority to make purchases up to £20M in total without wider consultation).
- generating more income through services such as green waste collections;

- making organisational changes to ensure we are 'fit for purpose' to deliver the Council Plan
- going digital to deliver services as cost effectively as possible.

### Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

This consultation is about banning the feeding of seagulls in Exmouth, Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth, Beer and Seaton for another three years and restricting where dogs can be walked off lead in public and beaches they are banned from during the summer.

- [Tell EDDC what you think about their proposed Public Space Protection Orders until 5pm on 20 March 2020.](#)

## Fly tipping

On Wednesday 5 February 2020, East Devon District Council's Cabinet approved the introduction of an additional fixed penalty fine against householders who fail in their duty of care in respect of how their waste is disposed. This sends a strong message to householders because the financial penalty will be exactly the same as it already is for anyone caught actually fly-tipping waste themselves. The council has adopted this variation in order to be able to use the following new penalties:

£200 fine (reduced to £120 if paid within ten days of service of the notice) for small fly tips of 180 litres (a standard wheeled bin) or less.

£400 fine (reduced to £200 if paid within ten days of service of the notice) for medium and large fly tips.

Officers from both the Environmental Health and StreetScene teams will now be able to issue a fixed penalty notice to a person who has breached their duty of care by not ensuring the proper disposal of their waste.

Householders must either pass waste on to the council's collection service, or take certain waste to recycling centres or pass it on to registered waste carriers. They must not pass waste on to any person who does not hold a licence.

If unlicensed collectors are used they may fly tip the waste and in these cases the householder remains responsible for it. If the fly tipper cannot be found then the originator of the waste can be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

During the past two years the Environmental Health service of East Devon District Council has investigated 49 littering and fly tipping cases and issued 25 fixed penalty notices. They have collected £3,460 in fines and £1,263 in clean up reimbursement costs.

Commercial carriers of waste must hold a licence and they are at risk of being issued with a fixed penalty if they carry waste without one. Some of the fly-tips investigated have involved a significant quantity of material or large items such as mattresses and white goods, but many of them amounted to just two or three black bags, fast food packaging or one or two small electrical items.

Householders can check that waste carriers are licensed on the Environment Agency website. They can arrange for a bulky waste or additional collection by contacting the council's Customer Services team on 01395 516551 or making a request using the council's website [eastdevon.gov.uk/waste](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/waste)

## Broadband

Openreach is planning to make ultrafast broadband available in 27 market towns and villages across the South West and Newton Poppleford, Budleigh Salterton and Knowle are included in these. It's part of a bigger announcement involving 227 'harder to reach' areas across the UK, with building to start in the next 14 months. A report by the Centre for Economics & Business Research commissioned by Openreach in 2019 claims that connecting everyone in the South West of England to 'full fibre' broadband by 2025 would create a £4.3 billion boost to the region's economy.

The report also revealed that 42,000 people in the region could be brought back into the workforce through enhanced connectivity. This could include roles within small businesses and entrepreneurs – as well as allowing thousands more people to work remotely by unlocking smarter ways of working, better public services and greater opportunities for the next-generation of home-grown businesses.

## 2020 Septic Tank Rules and updates General Binding Rules (GBR)

A resident notified me last year of the updates that are required by the Environment Agency where properties in England and Wales with a septic tank that discharges into a water course must replace or upgrade their system by 01 January 2020. This deadline has now been relaxed and the guidance now says you must do one of the following as soon as possible:

- 1) Connect to a mains sewer
- 2) Install a drainable field, (also known as a infiltration system) so the septic tank can discharge into the ground instead.
- 3) Replace your septic tank with a small sewage treatment plant

The guidance goes on to state that those affected by GBR must have plans in place to carry out this work within a reasonable timescale, typically 12 months.

This issue is causing delays to property sales and those with septic tanks that discharge into a water course may need to consult specialist drainage contractors for their advice.

## Playparks in Axminster

In my role as Vice-Chairman of EDDC I officially opened two playparks in Axminster. The larger one at Foxhills is an enviable resource for entire families to enjoy with a really wide range of play equipment suitable for older and younger children. Apart from the play equipment some of the pathways are made to look like roads so that small children can practise riding their bikes and scooters. The ground is also marked up with traditional games like hopscotch. There is a ground level trampoline, roundabout, huge climbing frame with slides and ropes that develop strength and co-ordination in a fun way. The equipment has a farm theme. The area was designed by local school children who came along to play at the opening and had a wonderful time trying everything out. It is well worth a visit with children if you are in the area for ideas on what we might aspire to in Newton Poppleford. The land is owned by EDDC and the upgrade was funded through them.



## Local Matters

### [Enforcement notice on stables in Harpford.](#)

Walkers may have noticed a very large barn which appeared on land adjacent to Harpford Woods which is being used for equestrian purposes rather than agricultural purposes. This was put up without planning permission and a notice has been served on the owner to remove the barn. However, one large area of the barn has taken itself down in storm Denis.

### [Footpath 3](#)

Concern was raised about the Footpath that runs parallel to the High Street from Venn Ottery Road to Lark Rise/Meadow Drive. Our PP3 footpaths officer has confirmed that what the landowner has done is perfectly legal, he has moved the footpath route back into its correct line, against the field margin and put up new fencing. People have walked off line as the scrub has gradually encroached but the landowner is within his right to clear the scrub and re-establish the correct route. The cut back scrub is horrible for dogs to walk on initially but should hopefully settle down over time as it is walked more.

### [MUGA play area](#)

I attended the Youth Club at the Pavilion to ask the young people there for their views of improvements they would like to see for Youth Play. It was unanimously agreed that they would like the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) upgraded to an all-weather surface, new nets, fencing, lining and so on. The Parish Council are working towards this using S106 money owed to the parish from recent housing developments. The young people I spoke to were eloquent and helpful in their ideas. Ultimately they would like to see a skate park in Newton Popleford.

### [Double Yellow Lines](#)

I think the issue of the blue car which was persistently parked on the double yellow lines at the entrance to Meadow Drive has been resolved.

Residents may also have noticed that new double yellow lining in Otter Reach was disrupted by a car being parked right where the lines were due to be painted. In looking into this matter it turns out that councils are able to prosecute under Advertising Consent regulations where vehicles are parked in a prominent location "principally for the display of advertisements". I spoke to the owner of the car and explained the situation and they were very apologetic and moved the car the next day.

In making contact with DCC about the yellow lining I asked them whether it wouldn't be more efficient to notify residents of their intention to put the lines down so they could ensure their cars were moved away in good time. You may have noticed that Capper Close also had intermittent double yellow lines painted because a motorbike was parked in the middle of the section! It remains that way to date.

### [King Alfred Gate](#)

I note the land that was promised for a doctors' surgery is now up for sale as a building plot on the open market with planning permission for two luxury houses. I have written to the MD of Clinton Devon Estates asking where the 'community orchard' that was promised is situated on the site and why Cavanna Homes offered some financial support for a community project to the parish council and then subsequently withdrew their offer.

### Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you to everyone who gave us feedback on the draft Neighbourhood Plan. A number of changes have been implemented and the document returned to EDDC who will in turn consult the Planning Inspectorate to determine if the plan is sound.

### DCC Consultation on proposals to change the speed limit on the A3052/Four Elms Hill to 40mph

This consultation is currently open and objections and comments should be received by 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

<http://devon.cc/tro> or write to

Ref IMR/B17079-5814 County Solicitor, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QD.

### Beavers Living on the River Otter

It was reported in the Sidmouth Herald this week that over a 5 year period scientists from University of Exeter and the Devon Wildlife Trust have concluded that beavers have benefitted wildlife and people by alleviating flooding,, reducing pollution and increased the population of fish, amphibians and other wildlife on the River Otter. There are currently thought to be 8 breeding pairs currently. DEFRA have extended the River Otter Trial until September 2020 and will then decide whether the beavers can remain there.

Val Ranger

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