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The NHS

I was unfortunate enough to be admitted to hospital at the start of the New Year. The entire hospital was split into either Covid-19 wards or non-covid wards and a bed had to be found on any ward where they could take a non-covid patient (having been tested negative on arrival). Staff shortages were very evident. Even more shocking was the shortage of IV pumps. At one point it took 4 hours to find a spare IV pump in the hospital when I needed IV hydration, there were no pumps left in the equipment bank.

The new ‘My Care’ online system (paper records are no longer generated), is a very good idea but has lots of teething problems and made the ordering of any prescriptions and drugs very slow. It is of course ideal that once the records are online, as any doctor anywhere in the hospital can access your notes and records on their PCs and ipads immediately, rather than having to send out for your paper notes which might in turn take some considerable time to arrive. In theory patients can also access

their own notes and test results but viewing has recently been restricted as patients were finding out results to tests without a professional to talk them through the significance of their results. It was also frustrating to see the number of patients who didn't turn up for important tests leaving the doctors who were expecting a busy morning marking time.

I was grateful to be treated but very glad to be home. It was sad to see the pressure the NHS and the staff who work under that banner face at the best of times and this is only exacerbated by the additional pressure of the covid positive patients they are now caring for.

Despite hospitals being under pressure, nevertheless it is so important that you do not delay contacting your doctor and if necessary insisting you are referred onto a specialist if you know you have a health issue that is not normal for you. Do not delay.

In the meantime continue to follow the guidelines about the lockdown generally, social distancing, hand-washing and wear your face masks in order to keep yourself and others safe. I think appointments for vaccinations are finally coming through for Newton Poppleford residents.

Planning issues

Two quite significant applications were considered on Wednesday 6th January 2020. These two applications took up about 4 hours of the 6 hour meeting.

The Lower Otter Valley Restoration scheme.

This planning issue attracted a number of supporters and objectors from members of the public. Very understandably residents in Granary Lane were concerned that they had been overlooked in the matter as it was explained a number of times this was not a flood defence scheme but rather a land management issue. Some speakers felt that residents of roads adjacent to the area hadn't been sufficiently consulted and nor were there any additional plans specifically to protect their properties. They felt that the engineers hadn't even visited their properties until two months after the initial reports were produced. Others spoke in favour of the scheme, such as representatives from the Jurassic Coast and the Otter Valley Association. I think it is very natural to have concerns when you live in a property that can be in danger of flooding and the planning condition that stated such properties would be 'monitored' as the scheme developed was probably not very reassuring. The planning committee had undertaken site visits and done considerable research behind the scenes and on balance voted to support the scheme. Here is the EDDC press release:

A project to help a river valley adapt to climate change and create an internationally important wildlife reserve now has planning permission.

East Devon District Council has approved a pioneering project to help a river valley on England's Jurassic Coast adapt to climate change and create an internationally important wildlife reserve. The EU-funded Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) will reconnect the River Otter to its historic floodplain and return the lower Otter Valley to a more natural condition; creating more than 50ha of intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh and other valuable estuarine habitats.

LORP is a partnership between the Environment Agency, local landowner Clinton Devon Estates, and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust that currently manages the estuary. It also has the support of Natural England, RSPB and Devon Wildlife Trust. The success of the £15 million project rested on it being given the thumbs up by East Devon District Council. Planning approval means work on the project can start this spring (2021) and be completed by early 2023.

The Lower Otter Restoration Project is mainly funded by the European Interreg programme through an initiative called Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo). It is partnered with a similar project in the Saône Valley in Normandy, France. Both are pilot projects that aim to demonstrate an important principle – that early adaptation to climate change brings greater benefits than a delayed response or inaction. If successful, the adaptation model for these two projects will be rolled out to other locations in the UK and France.

The Lower Otter estuary lies within the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Planning approval marks the culmination of seven years of public consultation, careful planning and detailed discussions between a wide range of stakeholders. The River Otter is already known as one of the first locations in England to successfully reintroduce the beaver.

Although much loved, the Lower Otter Valley has been heavily modified by human hand in the last 200 years with the construction of an embankment, a road, a rubbish tip, an aqueduct and an old railway line. These structures are difficult and expensive to maintain and restrict natural processes including the movement of water. This reduces habitat quality and diversity. Since the creation of an embankment in the early 19th Century, the River Otter has been disconnected from much of its natural flood plain.

The creation of new habitats and restoration of the site will be achieved by breaching the embankment. This will allow a much greater extent of the original floodplain to flood at high tide and drain at low tide producing important intertidal habitat, mudflats and saltmarsh for wading birds. There will also be areas of reedbed and grazing marsh.

Once established, the new site will become a wildlife reserve of international importance within five years, fulfilling the aspirations of all partners involved.

East Devon District Councillor Geoff Jung, who is responsible for coast, country and environment, said: “I am delighted that East Devon’s planning committee unanimously voted to allow the Lower Otter Restoration Project to go ahead.

“This council is totally committed to issues related to climate change, from purchasing electric vehicles, a national leader in recycling and waste, and working with partners and landowners to manage our valuable natural coast and countryside from the dangers of our changing climate and sea level-rises.

“We recognise that there will be some disruption, whilst the work is being carried out, but the alternative risk of allowing the embankments to fail was too greater a risk. The proposal will return the Lower Otter to a more natural sustainable state, which will provide extra wildlife habitat that is being lost both here in East Devon and elsewhere.

Planning application in Ottery St Mary to build 150 houses and the new Tipton St John School

I am writing about this as Tipton School is just on the edge of our parish and a number of children within our parish currently attend Tipton School. I attended a meeting at the school some years ago when relocation was being discussed. It seemed to me that the previous headteacher of the time (who I believe has since taken early retirement), the governors and the Diocese had pretty much decided the school on its current site could not continue and the only alternative was to build a new school in Ottery St Mary. There seemed to me to be very little ‘consultation’ or will to look at alternative options. We were told that there are no other suitable sites available in close proximity

to Tipton St John and that the EA considered there to be a 'danger to life' if the children continued to attend the school at its current site. It has been some years since there was severe flooding in Tipton and the reason for the last flood was explained at the meeting due to a management issue with Metcombe Brook and my own view is that as children don't sleep there, it is perfectly possible to react quickly during the daytime to remove children to safety should heavy rain and flooding occur again.

Indeed during the planning meeting the Chairman asked that emotive terms such as 'a danger to life if the application in Ottery St Mary was refused' stopped being used by those supporting the OSM application. It also transpired during the meeting that it is possible that other sites may become available to keep the school in reasonable proximity to Tipton itself. It was noted that planning permission had been given very close to the school in Tipton for a fairly substantial raised house, and it was queried why a new school building couldn't be built on the current site along the same lines. Although many of the above points were raised, in fact they were irrelevant to the planning application at Ottery St Mary.

The applicant for the Ottery St Mary application was Devon County Council who were applying to build 150 more houses on the outskirts of OSM, in order to fund the building of the school (the new Tipton school) on that site in Ottery. They confirmed there was no funding to build the school as things stood. My own view was how many times do we have to hear from developers that if we let them build houses, they will build the infrastructure to support them only to revoke the offer down the line on the grounds of 'feasibility'. We have seen that in Cranbrook (we were told the town would attract private investors to build the infrastructure needed and thus to this day the town remains without a suitable town centre, work spaces, medical centre etc) and not least of all in Newton Poppleford and the miserable state of affairs re the doctors surgery at King Alfred Way. Surely the planning committee would not fall for this again? I was extremely anxious that outline planning should not be given as once they have that, developers often negotiate their way out of any previous promises they make at the time of outline approval.

Fortunately, the planning committee did not fall for it. The independent councillors representing Ottery St Mary spoke passionately and pointed out:

The application did not comply with the Local Plan nor the Neighborhood Plan, raised concerns about road safety in the area, the percentage of affordable housing was only 35%, way below what was expected, the site itself would be highly visually intrusive owing to the topography of the area, DCC admitted they don't have enough funding as things stand to build a school and I suspect with further government cuts coming that won't change. This rang even more alarm bells that 'feasibility' re the school building would later be given as an excuse not to build it.

There was little support for the application overall, although a number of councillors did speak up for it, one Tory councillor stating that a new roundabout, as part of the application, would be very welcome in Ottery. I thought that was really clutching at straws.

The planning committee refused the application, although of course this could go to appeal. In the meantime I hope a new possible site is found for Tipton St John to build a new school within easy reach of the village as the school is very much central to the heart and life of the village.

Joint overview and Scrutiny meeting 13/14th January 2021

I am on both of the above committees. Two meetings back to back were held to set the budget for next year and agree the key service plan objectives for 2021/2022. Last year these meetings ran on site at Blackdown House and ran over 8 hours each!!

Further to recent complaints about how Zoom meetings were managed and run, not least my own written complaint to EDDC at the deliberate timewasting and grandstanding of some councillors at Zoom meetings (who subsequently leave the meeting when they are bored) each of these meetings took around 4 hours including a couple of breaks and Chairs ensured that the pace was kept moving without stifling debate. This was a massive improvement.

The full service objectives can be viewed here:

[Service Plan objectives for 2021-22 v2 003 JA.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)

Long-awaited town centre for Cranbrook agreed by East Devon District Council Cabinet

I wrote last month about Cranbrook still being without decent infrastructure and that the current EDDC administration were not happy with what the builders consortium were offering by way of improving the situation. The current administration came under fire from EDDC councillors within Cranbrook itself for not agreeing with what the developers wanted to offer.

However, after hard fought negotiations a much better deal for residents has been agreed. Cranbrook will get the town centre it wants including a Morrison's supermarket, a range of shops, a youth centre, library and town council offices following a decision by East Devon District Council's Cabinet last night. The council has struck a hard-fought deal with developers to bring forward multi-million pound plans which includes land to provide a range of other community, leisure and business spaces and could include a leisure centre. Cabinet also agreed a way forward for a sports pavilion to be delivered through the developers working with Cranbrook Town Council.

Councillor Dan Ledger, East Devon District Council's portfolio holder for strategic planning, said: *"I am really pleased that our determined negotiations on behalf of the public interest in Cranbrook have paid off. Historic lessons must be learned about a council leaving the roll-out of a new town to developers - as was decided many years ago.*

"But we have now shown our commitment to win the very best possible outcome for local people in this situation, and I am proud that our administration stuck by its guns against much pressure to concede inferior terms four months ago".

Proposals were considered by two meetings of the strategic planning committee in October and December. Councillors rejected the developers' deals on both occasions because they were concerned that they wouldn't meet the needs of the town as it grew to the proposed 7,800 homes. Currently 2,200 homes have been completed. Following further negotiation, a better deal came forward just before Christmas. Subject to planning approval, facilities could be open by late 2022.

Residents and business update released by EDDC Friday 22nd January

[Business Grants - East Devon](#) – this is the new and updated guidance for businesses. There are grants available for businesses who are not registered for business rates so I have shown this as a separate link.

Here are the full links from EDDC:

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/latest-updates/east-devon-residents-coronavirus-update-22-january-2021/>

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/latest-updates/east-devon-business-update-21-january-2021/>

More than £80k given to struggling East Devon residents: Here's a list of grants that could help you

The authority has paid out more than £80,000 in the last three months alone, helping 169 residents who have been told to self-isolate through test and trace. EDDC has also spent £96,500 helping hundreds of people through the Covid-19 Hardship Fund, helping residents with utilities bills and food vouchers. The authority has not only been helping individuals but also community groups who are providing invaluable support to residents.

EDDC has handed out more than £40,000 to more than 26 community groups through its Coronavirus Community Food Fund and the Covid-19 Fund - a joint scheme with Devon County Council which has now re-opened to new applications. All of this has been made possible thanks to funding provided to the council by the Government and Devon County Council.

Below is a list of all grants available to East Devon residents who are struggling:

Test and Trace Payments, for those told to self-isolate:

Since October 2020, the council has had a total of 290 applications and approved 169 cases.

In total EDDC has paid out £38,000 as to 76 applicants through the discretionary scheme and £46,500 to 93 people through the standard scheme.

A £500.00 payment can be made if you:

- Have been told to isolate by NHS Test & Trace and
- Are employed or self-employed and
- Are unable to work from home and
- Will lose income as a result of being instructed to isolate and
- Are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits:
 - Universal Credit- Working Tax Credits
 - Income related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Income based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income Support- Pension Credit

A discretionary scheme is also available however due to very limited funds extra criteria does apply. To find out more about your eligibility and how to apply visit www.eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-trace-support-payment/test-trace-support-payment/

Covid-19 Hardship Fund:

The Covid hardship fund is for anyone who is struggling to pay for food or utilities even if they have not directly been affected by Covid. Since May 2020, the council has approved 346 applications for 315 different residents.

This included 306 food vouchers, 93 grants to help people pay for their electricity and gas bills, one application for help with travel costs and 15 people who were referred to a foodbank. Applications can be made by completing a financial hardship form. Funds will normally be paid via voucher or top up directly to utility accounts.

To find out more about your eligibility and how to apply visit

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/benefits-and-council-tax/information-financial-hardship-fund/

To make an application for the fund visit

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/benefits-and-council-tax/request-financial-support-coronavirus-covid-19/

Council Tax Exceptional hardship fund:

A payment out of the Exceptional Hardship fund is considered for anyone who is receiving council tax reduction (CTR) and who is still struggling to pay the remainder of their council tax bill.

Residents will need to complete an income and expenditure form. One off payments or weekly on-going awards can be made and will go directly to the council tax account.

To find out more about your eligibility and how to apply for an Exceptional Hardship Fund payment visit

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/council-tax-reduction/apply-for-an-exceptional-hardship-fund-payment/

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP):

This is for anyone who is in receipt of housing benefit (HB) or universal credit (UC) housing costs who cannot afford the shortfall in their rent. The aim of a DHP is to help protect tenancies or financially help out on a temporary basis whilst a solution to the underlying need is found/being put into place. This can be anything from downsizing or finding cheaper accommodation to debt advice or income maximisation.

Here are a few examples of where a DHP will be considered:

- Reductions in HB or UC where the benefit cap has been applied
- Reductions in HB or UC due to the removal of the spare room subsidy (size criteria)
- Rent shortfalls to prevent a household becoming homeless whilst the housing authority explores alternative options

To find out more about your eligibility and how to apply for a DHP visit

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/housing-benefit/housing-benefit-forms/apply-for-a-discretionary-housing-payment/

Other Help available:

If we are not able to make a financial award from one of the funds mentioned above we could still help through highlighting ways income could be maximised and expenses reduced. We can also refer or signpost into relevant agencies, organisations or external schemes that are best placed to help with individual needs.

Further recovery action for unpaid debts such as council tax arrears or housing benefit overpayments could be held as long as we are aware of the situation or that further work is being carried out.

To let us know about any help that may be needed use the financial hardship form available at

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/benefits-and-council-tax/request-financial-support-coronavirus-covid-19/

Coronavirus Community Food Fund:

Grants of between £500 and £2,500 are available. Applications are accepted from constituted and not-for-private-profit voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector groups and organisations, town and parish councils, charities, or a combination of such groups working together.

To find out more about the fund, see previous projects that were given grants, and apply visit

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/community-support/coronavirus-community-food-fund/>

Covid-19 Fund:

The Covid-19 Fund is a joint grants scheme between Devon Council Council and EDDC that aims to support community-led schemes that carry out the small but important things that can safely address some of the issues arising because of the current Coronavirus restrictions, including support for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable. It provides small grants of between £300 and £700, grants may be given for higher amounts for exceptional projects. To find out more, see previous projects that were funded, and apply visit

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/grants-and-funding/grants-available-from-us/covid-19-prompt-action-fund/>

Crowdfund East Devon:

East Devon District Council has grants available through crowdfunding. You can not only apply for up to £10,000 of the £100,000 of funding available from EDDC for East Devon projects, but also for a large amount of county-wide funding available from Devon County Council and from Devon and Cornwall Police. At the same time you can apply for grants from national pots that are present on Crowdfunder UK and attract other funding from the local community. Coronavirus related campaigns/projects that meet the eligibility criteria are welcome to apply. To find out more visit

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/grants-and-funding/grants-available-from-us/crowdfunding/>

EDDC has also created a Coronavirus Community Support Hub to provide residents with the latest information and help available. We also have a dedicated team who can help if you are feeling isolated, unable to access food or other services or are not sure on where to go for help and advice. Visit

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19

or call on our special helpline on 01395 571500.

Census 2021 week beginning 21st March 2021

Households across the nation will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

The Census is a snapshot of who we are and how we live our lives. The information is vital for assessing community needs for services such as schools and Doctors surgeries as well as how our communities are made up and changing.

Census weekend is the 21st March It is so important everyone takes part and it has been made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them.”

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

For more information visit www.census.gov.uk <<http://www.census.gov.uk>> and follow on twitter and facebook at @census2021 or LinkedIn just put Census 2021 in the search box and there is loads of useful information for you there.

Information about this will be posted on the Parish Council Website and the Newton Poppleford Facebook Page. Support can be offered if people need help with completing the forms.

The new Local Plan – EDDC Press release.

Residents wanting to have their say on how many homes are built and where are being urged to share their views.

East Devon District Council’s new Local Plan will outline how the district addresses the climate change emergency, how many new homes should be built and where, how and where new jobs should be created, how we should support our town centres and how we protect our built heritage and natural environment.

The Local Plan is the key document used in making decisions in East Devon. Everyone who lives, works and spends time in the district has been asked to share their views about the future of the district as part of the East Devon’s Local Plan Consultation which is now live.

The consultation also seeks views on the quality of new developments and how this could be improved by changing how development is delivered in the district. This could include encouraging a

wider range of types of housing to be delivered by supporting self-builders and small local developers.

Councillor Dan Ledger, portfolio holder for strategic planning, said:

"It is so important that people look at this consultation and tell us what they think.

"The future planning of East Devon is something that will really impact on all our lives for years to come.

"Unfortunately people often only get interested in planning issues when a specific development directly affects them but this plan will affect us all and how we as a community respond to key issues like climate change and housing our residents. I would urge everyone to use some of the extra time they now have at home due to lockdown to be proactive, to review this consultation and most importantly, have their say so that we can understand what is the right approach for East Devon. This is a key consultation and your chance to tell us how we should shape communities up and down East Devon, please use it."

The consultation can be viewed on-line at: www.eastdevon.gov.uk/newlocalplan and comments can be made through an online form. The feedback we receive to this initial consultation will be used to help inform and refine our thinking as the local plan is progressed. We have set ourselves a challenging but exciting programme to produce the local plan.

In just over a years' time we hope to have a draft plan. Residents will be consulted on that. In late 2023 and into 2024 we will move to a final version of the plan informed by the comments we receive that will then be subject to an examination in public by a Government appointed planning inspector.

Alongside the local plan consultation we are also offering the opportunity, through a 'call for sites', for people to identify land areas that they think would be suitable for development. We will look at the sites submitted and will choose from them a list of those that we think should feature in the local plan as future land for development.

As part of future consultation there will be the opportunity for people to comment on favoured site choices

The Pelican Crossing in the High Street, Newton Poppleford

After the tragic death of a resident who died after an accident at the traffic lights in the High Street, the Chairman of the parish council has written to DCC asking for the timer to be extended, allowing those crossing the road a bit more time before the lights change.

Double yellow lines off side roads on the High Street/Station Road

A number of residents have contacted me as double yellow lines in Millmoor Lane seemed to have been missed off the latest consultation. I took this up with our local Highways officer who admitted that this road had been put forward for double yellow lines but had then been 'forgotten' from the list but it would be put forward for the next round. I have asked for a time scale on this but no answer has been forthcoming.

Concern has also been raised about the way the footpath on Station Road ends rather abruptly where it joins School Lane and that the double yellow lines proposed on School Lane need to be extended further up the road to improve access and visibility for both pedestrians and drivers alike. This is being discussed at the next parish council meeting on Monday 25th January 2021.

Four Elms Hill

I imagine you can predict what sentence is coming next – it's the same lame excuse as last year at this exact same time. Jacobs have delayed the work to the hill as it would be 'too dangerous' as they are gritting the roads. Concerned about being fobbed off once again with these pathetic excuses, our parish clerk and Devon County Councillor took this up with Jacobs, the contractors. Responses were:

it is proposed to carry out the sign installation under traffic control with the lining work postponed as it is neither safe nor practical to close the road for markings if there is a risk that salting might be necessary. If there is just a lane closure the gritters are able to spread salt across into the closed off lane. Road markings carried out on a salted surface often lift off within a few months

and by way of explanation a representative told us this:

To update you on timescales, the signs will be installed next week and therefore the revised speed limit will be in place. We are finalising the date with contractors and I will let you know which day as soon as I hear, and hopefully prior to the Parish Council meeting.

I can understand your queries and comments relating to the programme (this was because we registered our disgust with yet another delay, especially given that the work is being done on the grounds of all year round safety). The works were awarded to the principal contractor who then organised the date amongst contractors. I believe there must have been a breakdown in communication. This is frustrating, particularly as we have been trying to implement this scheme for some time, as mentioned.

So in summary the speed limit signs will go up, but the double white lines will be delayed until Jacobs can get their act together. It is a pathetic response.

Residents' concerns

Recycling

I think residents on the whole have been very understanding about disruption to the usual collection due to Christmas, the unusually high amount of cardboard being put out now home deliveries are thriving, and the very reduced number of refuse staff working due to either testing positive for CV-19 or having to self-isolate. I have had only a few complaints about this

A resident wrote to a number of EDDC councillor's querying why DCC don't accept Christmas cards for recycling into cardboard but EDDC do accept them. This is the response given by Gareth Bourton, the officer who has responsibility for recycling at EDDC.

As the Exeter information points out recycling of different materials and the processing of those materials is a complex sector and systems and processing methods vary significantly.

Cardboard products fall broadly into two categories :

- *Brown board or OCC – these are the heavier products that usually go to make such things as cardboard boxes and they are often corrugated for strength. This is generally of higher value in the markets.*

- *Grey board – these are lighter weight products that make packaging such as small boxes eg cereal packets etc. Christmas cards would fall into this ‘lighter’ category. This is generally of lower value in the markets.*

At ECC these materials are separated by the local Exeter Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and then passed on to processors as separate materials. One of the reasons ECC do this is that ECC has a significant commercial recycling collection business which collects from many retailers. This commercial recycling stream is almost entirely made up of brown board and, therefore, when combined with the cardboard materials from the domestic waste stream the total stream has a high content of brown board. I believe it is then worth ECC separating this from the other cardboard categories using their MRF to produce a high brown board content product.

At EDDC we collect both of these grades together from the domestic waste stream and then sell the resulting mixed material direct to mills as a mixed material which in the market has the category of Hard Mixed Paper (HMP) – this is a common approach for many local authorities. HMP is separated at the mills and used to make a variety of packaging products. Every load we send to our processor has to meet strict quality requirements and it is extremely rare that we would not meet these. The HMP that we produce in EDDC has a reasonably high content of brown board and has a reputation with our processors of being a quality product and is sought after.

It is for this reason that at EDDC we are able to include greeting cards in our HMP mix as long as they do not contain glitter or similar ‘embellishing’ materials which do compromise the processing.

As you can see two different situations have two different approaches but please rest assured all of the systems in Devon are recovering valuable resources and striving to produce the best quality we can both for environmental and economic benefit.

The HMP processors we use at EDDC are able to deal with a variety of products including those printed with a variety of inks or using binding material such as tape. Having said that manufacturers of all of these items are steadily adjusting to using ‘non polluting’ or ‘hard to process’ products as awareness of environmental matters continues to grow and adjustments are made. I think we all hope that this would be quicker and we can play our part as consumers in trying to accelerate this by the purchasing choices we all make as individuals. There are some legislative changes on the horizon which will provide commercial incentives to producers to improve the ‘recyclability’ of all products and we very much look forward to these coming into place in the next few years.

We are constantly in touch with our processors and if their quality criteria should change at any time we will get early notice and then make adjustments to how we recover the materials that we do but at the moment we can continue to collect (non glittery) greetings cards.

Whilst making comparisons it might be worth noting that the latest verified recycling rates by DEFRA put ECC at 26.1% and EDDC at 60.5%. Due to our experience the EDDC team has been involved in coaching and passing advice to ECC as they prepare to change the ECC system in the near future to improve overall recycling performance nearer to the levels we have achieved in East Devon. We are always happy to pass on our learning to others to assist in improving environmental performance across the county.

Double yellow lines

See above.

Thoughtless parking around Newton Poppleford school.

A resident contacted me about this around school pick up and drop off times where those collecting children park across or very close to driveways making it difficult for residents to access their own drives. This needs to be addressed with the school headteacher and a program of education with the children themselves who are usually very understanding about personal responsibility through education. The parish council are working hard too with Devon County Council and our DCC councillor Claire Wright to improve how drop off and collections can be done safely without disruption to those who live around the school.

Val Ranger

EDDC Ward Councillor, Newton Poppleford and Harpford

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