# EDDC Ward Councillors report for Newton Poppleford and Harpford

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# Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

This is still ‘live’ and I hope residents have been able to read at least the summary document if not the full 105 pages! We are having some more hard copies printed for circulation. We would like to have more feedback from residents either by letter, phone call (Gill on 568928) or email to:

**Np,nhp@btinternet.com**

**Or come to one of the open events:**

Saturday 30th November 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm Pavilion

Saturday 7th December 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm Newton Poppleford Village Hall

We have had some interesting feedback so far; we have had some obvious errors pointed out which just goes to show that when you look at a document for too long you start to see what you want to see. (a map of Harpford woods is upside down for example). What is clear is that the Neighbourhood Plan is still not understood by some people.

# EDDC Scrutiny Meeting – Report on Recycling

A report was given to the Scrutiny Meeting in part following concerns raised at the last Full council meeting about the exact nature of where our recycling goes, prices, amounts and the integrity with which it is passed on. These are some points I thought were worth noting. Where I mention a ‘fall in prices/rise in prices’ that refers to the price EDDC gets through selling the materials it collects:

If you need to buy drinks in containers, by far the best recyclable material is aluminium. It has a much better financial return than glass or tin and most certainly better than plastic, it is much less carbon heavy in the whole on the recycling process. It can also be made directly into other aluminium products. My colleague Cllr Cathy Gardner suggested that all LED sports centres should no longer sell plastic bottles in their vending machines, only aluminium containers. I hope EDDC officers will be following this up.

Don’t buy items in black plastic containers as the optical separators at the recycling plant cannot detect and pick up black plastic.

Tetra packs are likely to be phased out at some point as they are difficult to recycle being a combination of card, plastic and aluminium.

The price of paper sent for recycling has reduced considerably. There is one centre in the country that recycles paper and they are demanding a higher quality of paper than in previous years. Ie some bales can get rejected as being too wet, soggy etc. The drop in prices is likely to mean a drop in income for the council of £240,000 next year. Therefore the council may introduce a new way of collecting paper for recycling so it stays dry and uncontaminated.

The trial in Woodbury which separated cardboard and glass did not result in a better return in quality and prices and so will not be rolled out across East Devon.

The price of textiles has reduced considerably and the demand for them has fallen heavily. Textile demand is now for good quality clothing that can be sold on directly in its current state, rather than old worn clothing that used to be able to be sold as ‘rags’.

A deposit return scheme is not likely to be rolled out until 2023. But this would be ideal especially for glass bottles, glass being difficult to recycle and prices for glass put into our recycling sacks are poor.

Kerbside recycling – computers and all sorts of small electrical items can go directly into the green boxes, also old mobile phones etc. TVs are highly toxic to the environment and the current enthusiasm buying ever larger TVs with shorter and shorter lifespan is not helping.

Home composters are to be encouraged, but the green kerbside collection has also been a great success, is recycled locally at Hill Barton and is made into compost to be used locally in EDDC gardens.

EDDC is now nearly 100% ‘Zero to Landfill’. Devon County Council are now mothballing landfill sites. Instead our blackbin refuse is burnt to produce energy. However, we could still reduce the content of our black bins by 40% with more careful rubbish separation. There are ‘blackspots’ where certain communities do not recycle well. The council puts this down to areas where residents have moved in from out of area and are confused by our system. Alternatively it is possible that some residents just cannot be bothered.

Dedicated dog bins are a problem as separate dog waste can only go to landfill. It does not burn! Thus mixed bins which can also take dog poo are now encouraged as these can go for burning.

Blue kitchen food bin liners are not compostable and these are removed as part of the process before our food compost is used for energy. This means that you don’t have to purchase special caddy liners. You can of course use newspaper which is better than plastic though more difficult to manage but alternatively could also use any bag to line the bin.

NB My ‘handy home hint’ from Marie Kato is to keep the bin liner in a space in the deep freeze rather than having it sitting in the side in your kitchen. This results in no smells, no cats turning out your bin if you put meat bones in it, no badgers turning out your bin in the garden and no maggots in the bin in the summer. I can also get much more in the bag and can pour in fats etc after cooking and they solidify in the freezer rather than melting the bag due to it being permanently wet. I then pop the frozen bag into the outside bin.

A 1% increase in recycling can result in a £20K increase to the council.

Apparently some plastic can now be used in tarmac which allegedly does not leak particulates into the environment.

There is a list of items that can be recycled on the EDDC website:

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/3385606/a-z-materials.pdf>

EDDC has been awarded for its Alexa initiative (see below)

EDDC are the second highest council in the country for recycling rates.

Here is where our recyclable materials go, there is a map on the next page:

https://eastdevon.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling-the-environment-and-our-responsibilities/where-does-my-recycling-end-up/

Obviously it raises questions about land miles etc but it seems that there are no local recycling centres for many of the items (but food and greenwaste are recycled very locally).

Processors are regulated by the Environment Agency – East Devon District Council and SUEZ only use permitted processors. What was clearly stated though was that once raw products have been sold on, what happens next is outside the control of EDDC. So for example EDDC only sells plastic to companies that turn that plastic into fine pellets to be remade into other products but they cannot control where the company that bought the plastic, in turn, sells it on to.

What was clear is that EDDC officers are working very hard to improve our recycling and to ensure the integrity of recycling in East Devon.

Continued overleaf…..

EDDC are at a tipping point for services and it is going to become more expensive to recycle materials in future.

What is clear is that ‘Refuse, reduce, re-use’ are top priority, followed closely by recycling that which we cannot ‘refuse, reduce, re-use’.

# S106 payments

This time a year ago Scrutiny were being promised that by the spring 2019 we would have a database that allowed us to easily see what monies we are owed, where it came from, what we can use it for etc. The new software programme required manual input of old data in order to work properly and that was a very labour intensive process. That is all understood however patience is running thin as monies owned to councils is still not forthcoming and furthermore the decision making process on how that money can be spent, and who makes that decision is still clouded in fog. I complained that processes were not clear. Service Lead Planning Strategy Officer Ed Freeman disagreed and said it was on the website and deliberately written loosely to allow for flexibility. It was agreed to refer this back to Overview to review the process and clarify exactly who the decision makers are. I also requested that a timeframe be set for decision making. The Chairman of Scrutiny disagreed with this; EDDC are always against timeframes – a sign perhaps they are comfortable working in the public sector in a culture where timing frequently slides.

# Car parking TAFF (Task and Finish Forum)

You may recall that the matter of raising car parking charges was referred to the Scrutiny Committee. It was decided to recommend that the matter was referred back to Cabinet so they could reconsider their decision. It was clarified at Scrutiny that the budget is set for the next financial year so any changes would not come into effect until the following year. So Scrutiny agreed that a TAFF should be set up to take a really broad look at car parking in the area and how/if charging should be changed. A number of councillors suggested scrapping charges altogether as some other authorities have done which has had a beneficial effect on local businesses. This may help businesses but would not fill the hole in the council budget.

I asked the officer who recommended the rise in charges, if reducing car parking to £2.00 for the whole day over the winter period, resulted in an increase in revenue, why that was not extended to the whole year? The response was that in the summer there was no need to encourage visitors to the town as car parks were already generally busy.

I also asked about EDDC expenditure on maintenance of our local car park. The response was that on average EDDC spends £900 per year on maintenance on the free car parks. That figure is totally misleading as from memory I can only recall one pot hole being filled and a bit of sweeping up and tidying around. Just as a reminder Residents can currently obtain a parking permit for one East Devon District owned car park for £100 for the year, which works out at 27p per day if you visited town every day of the year, with each additional car park permit costing an additional £20.00 up to a total of £200 for parking in every car park in East Devon.

At Full Council on 23rdOctober it was agreed that there should be a change to the Constitution and that Car Parking should be added to a list of items that must be brought before Full council for decision on changes to car parking charges.

# National Park

Following the recommendations of the Glover Review, which suggested that the East Devon and Dorset National park is a contender to become one of the next national parks, we now await the governments response to that review. Regretfully the government seem otherwise engaged at the moment. In the meantime it was agreed at Full Council in October that a working party should be set up to consider the positive and negative effects of becoming a national park. This was a big step forward given that the last administration would not even allow the matter to be aired and discussed.

# Recycling

There was wide support on the Motion put forward at EDDC’s Full Council for far more information about where the items we put out for recycling actually go for processing and for more emphasis on reducing recycling through ‘refuse, refill, re-use’. This was a motion initially refused by the Chief Executive as not of ‘immediate relevance’ to the workings of the council. Fortunately Sidmouth ‘plastic warrior’ Cllr Denise Bickley insisted that the Motion was debated and she got her way. There was full support for this across political parties. (See report above)

# Recycling support at home via EDDC App

Residents living in East Devon can now find out about recycling in their homes using the Amazon Alexa App. Starting with the question ‘Alexa – ask East Devon District Council’ …followed by a relevant recycling or waste question. Many Alexas are situated in the kitchen and this is the ideal place when those recycling questions arise.

# Digital Confidence Sessions

Don’t forget, you can also access support with how to use your phone in the way indicated above by attending the **Digital Confidence** sessions run by local resident Ben McGowan. The first session is on Saturday 30th November at Newton Poppleford Primary School 9.30 – 11.30 am.

# Private Sector Housing @EDDC – Making Homes Healthier

There is help available with home improvements and adaptions. There are loans and grants available, financial support for the vulnerable and the ‘fuel poor’, Disabled Facilities Grants, Improving Energy Efficiency and Home Improvement Loans. If you search for Making Homes Healthier on the EDDC website there is a link to book your place at an information event on Wednesday 27th November 2019 from 1.30 – 4.00 pm in Exmouth Town Hall.

# Police report

I attended the Venn Ottery and Southerton Residents Association AGM on Thursday 14th November. PC Steve Lee also attended, as he does for our monthly parish council meeting, and Steve gave a really good update on crime in the local area and in particular police actions taken over acts of vandalism. I am sure all of us present reflected on how lucky we are to have such dedicated and sensible local policeforce. When they catch young local offenders they take the approach of re-education over hard line punishment and this is proving to be very effective. The parish council have been involved where the vandalism occurred in our parish.

# Award for Venn Ottery Quarry

At the VOSRA AGM Toby Taylor of the RSPB reported that Venn Ottery Quarry had won an award for the restoration project that is ongoing on the site. The site was up against competition from 3 other sites. There is another two years to go before Aggregate Industry’s 5 year post quarrying management obligation comes to an end. It is incredible to see the land being returned to nature in an enhanced state. Once the restoration plan has bedded in there will be public access to the site but this is still at least two years away.

# Crisp packet recycling

I was asked to remind residents that Newton Poppleford School is running a crisp packet recycling scheme. The collection point is on the playground and so is accessible during school hours. Please flatten the bags rather than folding them. Any crisp brand is fine. All donations are gratefully received and helps towards fundraising for the school as tetracycle give the school money in return for the packets. **HOWEVER**, there is a debate about the wider issues of recycling crisp packets and whether the recycling process is more carbon heavy than the energy that can be harnessed from putting them into the black household bin where they would be burnt for energy. (see EDDC Scrutiny Reports). It is possible that some major companies want to be seen to be ‘doing the right thing’ in terms of offering a recycling option but this can be considered ‘greenwashing’.

# Talkworks

There has been some exceedingly sad news in the village lately and I want to bring to your attention an NHS service called Talkworks.

*Is the way that you are feeling affecting your daily life? Are you struggling to cope, feeling low, anxious or overwhelmed by your thoughts and feelings? Are you living with a health condition that is making you feel tired, frustrated and worried? You are not alone and we can help. We are a* ***free****,* ***confidential****,* ***NHS*** *talking therapy service (previously the Depression and Anxiety Service), helping you to feel better and giving you the tools and techniques to improve your mental and physical wellbeing.*

You can self refer to this service by phoning 0300 555 3344.

Talkworks is not a counselling service (reflecting back on past experiences) it is a talking therapy (cognitive behavioural therapy) that helps you to understand and cope with the way you are feeling right now and how to make changes to those feelings. You can be seen quite quickly and there are venues in most towns in East Devon and Exeter itself. I have referred students to the service and have had good feedback from them and other peers. If you are worried about friends or family do speak to them openly and frankly and urge them to seek help either through this service or directly via their doctor.

Val Ranger

Ward councillor Newton Poppleford and Harpford

Email vranger@btinternet.com Mobile 07475 201 340

# Forthcoming events:

**Harpford Village Hall pop-up pub**

Friday 29th November 2019 from 7.00 pm – 10.30 pm. Local beer and cider, Mulled wine, great company, All Welcome.

**Christmas Carol Service followed by Mulled wine and mince pies**

The St Gregory’s Church, Harpford, Christmas church service is on **Sunday 22nd December 2019 at 6.30 pm** and Harpford Village Hall Committee and the PCC would like to welcome everyone afterwards to join us in Harpford Village Hall for complimentary mulled wine and mince pies. All welcome.