Contents

[Fireworks and Chinese Lanterns 1](#_Toc30161791)

[Car Parking Task and Finish Forum (TAFF) 1](#_Toc30161792)

[Four Elms Hill and other roadworks 1](#_Toc30161793)

[Delay to the Sale of the Knowle and Final Sale 2](#_Toc30161794)

[Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Public Consultation 2](#_Toc30161795)

[Temporary Glass Flood Defence Panel to be tested on Sidmouth Esplanade. 2](#_Toc30161796)

[Homelessness in the area. 3](#_Toc30161797)

[Local issues raised by residents. 3](#_Toc30161798)

**Recycling**

EDDC issued a press release to say that East Devon recycled ‘a whopping 1,200 tonnes of recycling and food waste in 12 days over Christmas and New Year’ with Cranbrook being the top recycler and Exmouth coming in second place. I am not sure that this can truly be said to be a ‘success’ and I wonder how much waste was entirely unnecessary. It is a figure I would like to see reduced by us all buying less food that will end up being thrown away and less ‘things’ just because it is Christmas.

# Fireworks and Chinese Lanterns

A number of councillors have received letters about the adverse impact of fireworks on some people and animals and the use of Chinese lanterns and asking EDDC to tighten up their policies to restrict these activities. EDDC have responded that they can only apply policies and restrict the activities that take place on their own land (for example balloon releases and Chinese lantern releases are already banned on their land). There is a nationwide campaign to stop the production of Chinese lanterns which can have devastating effects. A major fire resulted in the death of many animals on New Year’s Eve 2019 in Krefeld Zoo in Germany as a result of a Chinese lantern and there are many incidents around the UK too. However, legislation is really needed to make these illegal. Germany already has a ban on them but apparently the perpetrator there had bought the lantern online. There are also calls for fireworks to be restricted to major and well publicised events and for the noise levels to be restricted, something I fully support. I am sure EDDC will be discussing this further.

# Car Parking Task and Finish Forum (TAFF)

At the last meeting the committee looked at the winter car parking rates. The current £2.00 for all day parking has resulted in the car parks being choc-a-bloc all day but the Chamber of Commerce reported that this does not reflect more footfall in the shops of the town. The TAFF therefore recommended that the price next year should be £2.00 for four hours in the short stay car parks to encourage turnover of vehicles, but that the longstay car parks should remain at £2.00 for the entire day over the winter period as these tend to be a bit further away from the shops and these car parks are not so popular with users. There would therefore be an incentive for those who are able to walk that further distance to do so if they need to park for longer than 4 hours. There was a recommendation that town centre charges in the summer charge should be a minimum of £1.00 to discourage the 30-minute dash and encourage shoppers to stay that little bit longer to support local retail and coffee shops. Also, there is still the option of the 30 minute free on street parking which has a fairly frequent turnover. The £1.00 minimum charge would NOT apply to some car parks, say Sidford for example, which will be discussed separately. It would seem unreasonable to charge a minimum of £1 to park to buy a loaf of bread. The TAFF can only make recommendations to the Cabinet so the above are not ‘decisions’, just our recommendations.

# Four Elms Hill and other roadworks

I have now discovered a site called One.network which anyone can register on (name and email address only required) to see forthcoming roadworks proposed across Devon. You simply search on the location and say if you want to see what is forecast in the next week, next month, next 3 months or next 12 months. Each set of road works is labelled with a link saying who is undertaking the work (eg SWW), how long the duration of the work is expected to be and the purpose of the roadworks. From what I could see roadworks are scheduled on Four Elms Hill for the double white lines and speed reduction from 20th April to 1st May with a diversion in place. I cannot be sure if this is the final date as it has already changed a few times since I have been looking. But it is a useful site for finding out what roadworks are scheduled in your area. Our local DCC Councillor Claire Wright is also trying to get the date and arrangements confirmed so residents can be well prepared.

# Delay to the Sale of the Knowle and Final Sale

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. Lifestory Group were asking for an extension to the deadline. EDDC started legal proceedings to secure the agreed and contracted £9M payment along with any associated costs and damages. However, EDDC has now confirmed that on 14th January 2020 Lifestory Group completed on the sale paying £9,019,605 plus a £38,000 late payment fee. In March 2020 EDDC will consider a full project closure report which will review the relocation and first year full operational costs of the council’s new offices.

# Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Public Consultation

This can be found online <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/planning-isues/affordable-housing>. The consultation runs from Tuesday 14th January until Friday 28th February (5 pm). Any comments provided will be considered and changes to the SPD will be made if thought appropriate before being adopted. Do have your say on EDDCs policy on affordable housing.

# Temporary Glass Flood Defence Panel to be tested on Sidmouth Esplanade.

This is due to be installed on Sidmouth seafront on 20th January to see if the 1M high glass panel can stand up to storm by a pebble beach. It will be removed at the end of April. It is being called a ‘splash wall’ which belies it size. Apparently glass flood defence panels have been used before alongside sandy beaches to protect the esplanade and towns from flooding but this is the first time it will be used by a pebbly beach such as Sidmouth. Do go down and take a look and make your opinion known to the Beach Management Plan Steering Group. As one of the conditions of Sidmouth being able to borrow money for flood defences, a sea wall of at least 1M higher than the existing wall has to be built. The government requires funded coastal protection schemes to have a minimum allowance of 1.2M rise in sea level by 2125 due to global warming The glass panels will only make up sections of the wall as I understand it, not be the entire wall along the seafront.



# Homelessness in the area.

Over the Christmas period I had to contact EDDC Housing officers about a local situation and I also contacted another local organisation called Gateway who work very hard to prevent people from becoming homeless and to help those who find themselves in that situation. As we agreed, many of us are only a few missed pay cheques away from being in a very difficult financial situation that can threaten living in our homes and this can often occur out of the blue due to physical or mental illness, redundancy, caring responsibilities and so on. If you know of anyone who is struggling with their housing situation or is in fear of being made homeless it is always worth seeking help sooner rather than later. Local EDDC housing officers and Gateway will always try to help prevent a homeless situation occurring rather than having to deal with an emergency situation once matters have got out of hand.

# Local issues raised by residents.

Parking on yellow lines in Meadow Drive – DCC have now been contacted for help and enforcement. The fencing that lines the footpath that runs from Venn Ottery Road to Lark Rise has been re-sited making walking difficult for users, the perpetual problem of dog bins not being emptied, sometimes exacerbated by residents who bring carrier bags of dog poo from home and put them in the public bins (not very public spirited).

Val Ranger

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