

Yarty Ward – District Councillor’s Parish Council Report;

Cllr. Paul Hayward

October 2019

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Next meeting of East Devon District Council:

Council was due to meet again on 11th December in Honiton but due to the recently called General Election on the 12th, this meeting has been delayed until the following Wednesday (18th). As always, all members of the public are welcome to attend and ask questions / make representations as they wish. Details of the agenda and previous minutes always available (including audio recordings for those suffering from insomnia) via the website link below.

There will be motions to be debated and a series of written questions to Leader of the Council (which can then be followed up with additional verbal supplementary questions). This will be the last meeting of Full Council in 2019.

Recent meetings of EDDC:

All minutes / decisions / audio recordings available online at:

www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Full Council	23 rd October
Cabinet	2 nd & 30 th September
Scrutiny	3 rd October
Strategic Planning	22 nd October
Development Management (DMC)	1 st Oct & 29 th October
Overview	22 nd October

Planning Matters:

Recent Planning Applications within Yarty Ward:

- 19/2175/FUL – Hawkchurch, Playing field – night landing site.
- 19/2180/FUL – Hawkchurch, Stonebarrow – agricultural building
- 19/2235/FUL – Membury, Passlands – COU to holiday accommodation
- 19/2254/FUL – Chardstock, Hakes Farm – new extension (LBC)
- 19/2316/FUL – Hawkchurch, Parricks Bungalow – new hobby room
- 19/2463/FUL – Hawkchurch, Wyld Court – replacement conservatory (LBC)

Members of DMC have been undertaken a few site visits recently to assess site applications where the paper plans did not truly reflect the possible impact of the developments proposed. This committee is operating extremely well and the level of cross-party co-operation and agreement when considering plans that affect us all is heartening and a welcome change to the somewhat tribal and politically charged debates elsewhere in Council.

Car Parking:

This matter came before Council recently at a Cabinet meeting where a huge number of Councillors from across the political spectrum – from Exmouth to Axminster – spoke against the draft proposals which seemed ill-thought and could have had a significantly detrimental effect to our already-struggling town centres, not to mention the smaller villages where other parking changes were being put forward. After an extraordinarily long debate, the matter was passed back to Cabinet for review but, subsequently, Council took the matter back into its own hands and referred the entire subject to Scrutiny Committee which agreed to create a TAFF (Task and Finish Forum) to consider all aspects of the service and report back. It is acknowledged that Council does have a looming budget deficit of £2m+ in the next financial year but arbitrarily hiking parking charges did not appear to be the way to fill that fiscal gap. Watch this space!

Recent EDDC Press Releases:

Sidmouth Jurassic Paddle Board Social Media storm

Exmouth Seafront Phase 3 consultation

BREXit preparation arrangements at EDDC

General Election voter registration appeal

Success of Green Waste collection service

Honiton's Gate-to-Plate event

EDDC Peer Review; analysis and publication

Broadband improvements via new provider, Jurassic Fibre, after CDS debacle.

EDDC Crowdfunding workshops continue

Budleigh Salterton's new £150k Skate Park opened

Details of all of these initiatives and news stories can be found online via the website and social media feeds.

Climate Change Emergency Declaration update:

Council recently voted to bring forward the target date to make East Devon District Council “Carbon Neutral” from 2050 to 2040; setting us at the very forefront of climate change action in Devon. Towns and villages across the district are also considering ways in which they, and their residents, can make tangible changes to their policies and actions in order to deal with this pressing issue. At the last Full Council meeting, there was a proposal put forward by Cllr. Denise Bickley (Sidmouth) that EDDC should:

- i) Assess how it might best secure transparency as to the final destination of East Devon’s recycled plastic waste output.
- ii) Assess how the Council, in conjunction with DCC and Suez, prepare different reporting mechanisms for volumes and weights of recycled materials.
- iii) Encourage changes in public behaviour via media streams and other routes to promote the message of “refuse, refill and reduce” rather than simply concentrating on “recycling” as far as possible.

Action on Poverty:

Cllr. Mike Allen (Honiton) has been instrumental in bringing forward debate within the Council on establishing policy to ensure that the EDDC Corporate Plan (via Overview Committee) includes the following aspirations:

That no-one in East Devon is destitute without immediate help
That nobody should be in involuntary poverty for more than two year’s duration.

These proposals met, quite understandably, with almost unanimous cross-party support and the matter was deferred to Overview so that they can discuss with officers the best way to take this matter forward. I am delighted to be part of this scheme and applaud Cllr. Allen for his demonstrative and assertive cajoling to get this matter on the table.. Thank you, Mike!

Cross-parish co-operation:

I was delighted to be invited to Yarcombe PC to discuss the recent fire and subsequent concerns at Crawley Feed Mill (Membury parish). It was also an opportunity to discuss Defibrillators with Councillors and public alike and I hope to be able to assist them in that capacity in the coming months.

Similarly, I have been liaising with Axminster Town Council regarding the possibility of installing some extra defibrillators in the town in key positions, one of which may require a solar engineering project to allow the installation. In that respect, I have been talking to a national engineering company (thankfully in Weston Super Mare) and there appears to be scope for a new type of defibrillator cabinet which would be unique in the UK and which would allow for the provision of AED's in locations previously impossible... hope to update other parishes on this matter as design and build talks progresses.

Today, East Devon; tomorrow, the world!!

Audit and Governance:

EDDC finally received its qualified audit assurance for the year ending 31/3/19 and the external auditor was grilled quite strenuously by committee members as to the delays experienced and the failure to complete all the requisite tasks by the extended deadline, let alone the original date back in July. There appears to be a systemic problem within the regulatory audit regime and this is causing repercussions for Council's across the UK. A&G also considered the Council's overall finances (traffic light Green>Amber) with only one or two areas of concern and attention. The issue of EDDC's drive towards further commercialisation (to create new revenue streams as central funding is withdrawn) was discussed and this is likely to be an issue where opinion is sharply divided amongst Councillors. Further discussion and debate will be essential to ensure that – if Council proceeds down this route – it is done right first time around. The stakes are too high to make mistakes.

Across the Parishes:

I attended the opening of Hawkchurch's new re-surfaced tennis court (paid for in part by Section 106 funds) and enjoyed a marvellous cream tea c/o the Tennis Club association.

Membury Parish Council is seeking to provide additional public recycling bins in the parish but this is proving problematic as EDDC's service in the rural areas seems unable to cope with cross-contamination issues which potentially render the collected recycled matter unusable! Further discussions are afoot.

Chardstock Community Hall held a 70's themed evening to celebrate the re-opening of the hall following the recent energy efficiency and electrical improvements. The results were amazing and the party was a great success. The trustees and the Council are working together to further enhance the facility (potentially with solar arrays) and grant applications are in the pipeline to fund the non-inconsiderable costs of delivering such facilities. The outcome, though, would be a great push towards a carbon-neutral hall that creates all of the energy it needs to both heat (and cool) the hall.

Finally, I am delighted that All Saints village hall now has a fully functional conference and cinematic audio-video system and I am looking forward to the inaugural film night to show off this great feature of the hall... Thanks go to all involved but especially three gentlemen (who shall remain nameless) but without whom, the project would not have been possible. My sincere thanks to you all, and everyone else who assisted in bringing the big screen to the parish. Dirty Dancing, anyone??

And, finally; consultation fatigue!!

It seems that there is a fresh consultation each week promoted by EDDC ranging from Council tax to Social Care; Fire Services to Pebblebed Heaths and I understand if residents get a bit fatigued by these constant requests for feedback and interaction. However, if Council does not ask the residents (those essentially who pay all the wages in East Devon) then it could be accused of acting without mandate and in an arbitrary and cavalier fashion. Therefore, if you see a consultation that appeals, please spare a few moments to engage and participate. Without your voice and comments, Council is nothing!

My best wishes to you all as always.

Paul