

**Yarty Ward – District Councillor’s Parish Council Report;  
Cllr. Paul Hayward**

**August 2019**

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## **Next meeting of East Devon District Council:**

Council meets again on 23<sup>rd</sup> October in Honiton and all members of the public are welcome to attend and ask questions / make representations as they wish.

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).

## **Recent meetings of EDDC:**

All minutes / decisions / audio recordings available online at:

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)

Cabinet	10 <sup>th</sup> July
Scrutiny	4 <sup>th</sup> July
Strategic Planning	20 <sup>th</sup> August
Development Management	9 <sup>th</sup> July and 6 <sup>th</sup> August (DMC)
Overview	25 <sup>th</sup> July and 29 <sup>th</sup> August

## **Planning Matters:**

A recent planning case (now subject to appeal) in Newton Poppleford highlighted the inherent concerns connected with Section 106 conditions and caveats which are intended to mitigate the effect of development on a community. The cardinal flaw in this principle is that national legislation allows for such payments or “promises” by the developer to be re-assessed down the line on viability grounds and it was left to Cllr. Olly Davey (Green) to state his opinion quite unequivocally... “that these promises are not worth the paper they are written on”. The District Council has to balance the need to maintain the forward momentum of district-wide development within the Local Plan area whilst protecting communities from inappropriate & damaging over-development but it does appear that all the chips seem stacked on the other side of the table at present. Meetings of the DMC are open to the public and you are encouraged to attend to see how officers and councillors decide what is best for the district as a whole – fascinating debates guaranteed!

## **Council Governance:**

Cabinet met on the 10<sup>th</sup> July and, following representations from a number of Independent Councillors, resolved to direct the Overview Committee to look into whether EDDC should retain the existing Cabinet system of governance or move to the alternative Committee style, or perhaps even a hybrid of the both. EDDC will look at other Councils across the UK that have considered this matter and ultimately agree what will be best for the residents of East Devon, rather than just the interests of Councillors, political parties and officers. There is, for reasons I cannot fathom, a great deal of opposition to this issue and I wonder if perhaps democracy is something to be preached, but not actually practiced by some? Time will tell... I will keep everyone abreast of changes.

In the meantime, here is an example of what has happened elsewhere (in West Dorset actually)...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-36258528>

## **Press Releases:**

Recent press releases from EDDC:

*Section 106 spending in Axminster.*

*Congratulations to Honiton Rugby Club on their recent success.*

*Housing Benefit / Universal Credit service times.*

*Stray dogs and dog poop awareness messages.*

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

## **Section 106 / CIL:**

Both the Audit & Governance – and Strategic Planning – Committees have considered this issue in recent weeks. As mentioned before, the purpose of S106 (and its bigger brother, CIL > Community Infrastructure Levy) is to mitigate against the effects of development and to deliver infrastructure to our communities. Sadly, as a result of national constraints, there is already a £270m gap between anticipated receipts from s.106/CIL and the calculated infrastructure requirements of the district. This is unlikely to be bridged any time soon. Some Councillors believe that building even more houses across our lush green valleys and farmland is the only answer!! More houses, more cash to splash so to speak.

I am disinclined to agree. My own view is that developers (now making over £70,000 profit PER house built) should be asked to pay more towards the infrastructure and facilities that the new residents will expect to be available to them, not to mention those residents already living here and who suffer the inevitable consequences of rampant, unchecked development. Recent public meetings in Axminster demonstrate that building new houses without limit is not the “panacea” that some wish us to believe... especially if the same developers then renege on their promises and legal obligations to fund those amenities further down the line.. A robust system of legally enforceable conditions and a strong resistance to spurious viability claims is what we need, and the collective will to stand strong against those who want to have their cake, and to eat it.

## **EDDC Crowdfunding Opportunities:**

There is still over £95,000 for funding available to East Devon’s community and voluntary groups through **Crowdfunding** from EDDC in partnership with DCC and Devon and Cornwall Police. EDDC are running a free ‘introduction to Crowd funding session in Honiton on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 from 4.00 to 5.30 pm.

You must book a place in advance via email [crowdfund@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:crowdfund@eastdevon.gov.uk).

This is a separate fund from the **Community Building Fund** also run by EDDC. More information about the differences between these two funds and the criteria for each can be found on the EDDC website.

### **Cross-parish co-operation:**

In my job as Clerk to both All Saints and Chardstock Parish Councils, I am always delighted when Councils share ideas, experiences and resources as this allows all parties to benefit from mutual cooperation and collective goodwill. Recently, I have been chatting with the Clerks of other adjoining parishes and I am pleased to see that this spirit of cooperation is alive and well across the Yarty ward (and beyond too). Only by working together – rather than against each other – will smaller Councils be able to weather the storm (of cuts and financial pressure) that is looming on the horizon. Central government funding to Parish Councils has now completely vanished. The higher authorities (District and County) are all looking to reduce and curtail services as their budgets are equally constrained and so, consequently, more and more responsibility will fall on the shoulders of local parish councillors to provide the services that we all enjoy and have taken for granted in the past. The future of public services are, in reality, now intrinsically linked with the role of parish and town volunteers and whilst this might appear unfair and unreasonable to all those paying increased Council Tax bills, it is only by pooling our collective skills and resources that we will be able to access these services in the future. You may not agree, or approve, but this is the Big Society we were all told to be a part of.

### **And, finally:**

A timely reminder about scams. Not a day goes past without my hearing of yet another devious and despicable way that scoundrels have dreamed up to part people from their hard-earned cash! From calls about “BT” disconnecting your broadband, to Council Tax refund emails, HMRC tax rebates, failed parcel delivery cards and philanthropic African Princes wishing to share their enormous gold bar collections with random email recipients ... the list goes on! I have one simple word of advice. **Ignore the scam.** Put the phone down. Tear up the letter. Delete the email. HOWEVER PERSISTENT AND GENUINE THEY APPEAR TO BE. If in doubt, feel free to call me (or email) and I will be delighted to assist you in checking things out. Don't give your bank details to anyone. Don't feel pressured into making immediate decisions... there is always tomorrow to make your mind up! Scammers rely on the fear, worry and urgency they instil in you to get you to release your money. Please don't be a victim. Call me if you need a 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion on anything. Tell the scam to SCRAM!

My best wishes to you all as always.

Paul