

**Minutes for the Annual Meeting of Colyton Parish Council held in the  
Colyton Town Hall on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7pm**

**Present:** Cllrs K Mills, K Clifford, A Stenning, A Jarman, C Pady, S Real, J Gardiner, A Parr, C Denny, A Mills, P Arnott, J Hay and R Turner.

**Also in attendance:** EDDC Cllr H Parr and S Haines (clerk)

**Members of Public:** 3

**22/05/24 Election of Chairman for 2022/2023.** Cllr Hay nominated Cllr Parr to be Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Pady. The chance was given for any further nominees, none were forthcoming therefore Cllr Parr accepted the position and the Declaration of Acceptance to Office was signed at the end of the meeting. Cllr Pady thanked Cllr Parr for his past years in post and proposed thanks from the whole Council.

**22/05/25 Receipt & Approval of apologies for absence.** DCC Cllr Hartnell.

**22/05/26 Police Report.** Not received.

**22/05/27 Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Hay declared an interest on planning application 22/0878/TRE Knowles. Cllr Pady declared an interest on planning application 22/0876/FUL The Hayne. Cllr Arnott declared an interest on the Reece Strawbridge CIO Incorporation motion.

**22/05/28 Election of Vice Chair for 2022/2023.** Cllr Real nominated Cllr Clifford to be Vice Chair, this was seconded by Cllr Jarman. The chance was given for further nominees, none were forthcoming therefore Cllr Clifford accepted the post. Cllr Parr thanked him for his support.

**22/05/29 Public Question time.** The applicant for planning application 22/0876/FUL The Hayne stood up and gave a presentation.

Claire Duthuit explained she grew up in East Devon, studying at Uplyme Primary and Colyton Grammar School. Four generations of Claire's family have lived in this area, and most of her closest family remain.

Following her studies, Claire left to pursue social justice and environmental work with the United Nations at the UN Headquarters in New York and Geneva, and on projects around the world. Claire's work has focused largely on the climate and biodiversity crisis, advocating for positive, proactive solutions to environmental challenges — showcasing inspiring work that individuals, families, villages and towns across the globe are leading in the face of threats like climate change.

Claire explained that as for so many, the Covid pandemic fundamentally shifted her work and outlook on life. Along with Claire's husband Adrien - who also worked for the UN - they have five-year-old twins. They realised that putting down roots and being close to family were the most important things to them as they raised their family.

The couple will be working from home permanently after COVID.

Having tried and successively failed to get onto the property ladder, they have narrowed in on their goal: to build an eco-home that would embody the environmental principles they have been advocating for on a global scale in a project firmly rooted in this local community. They have partnered with Devon-based, sustainability-focused architecture firm, Roderick James Architects LLP, developing exciting plans that would rewild a half-hectare field on Love Lane - bringing orchards, hedgerows, ponds and wildflowers to the space, and significantly boosting biodiversity. There has been more than 30 studies and consultations with leading ecologists, landscape experts, tree specialists, renewable energy specialists and the AONB during the development of these proposals.

Taking up just 10% of the field, and nestled into the natural slope of the land, the project would realise a carbon-neutral, modest, single story eco-home for the family. 'The Hayne', would be a home built with local materials, using local tradespeople, with a green roof, a traditional cob wall, and integrated bat and bird boxes. Due to the careful attention to detail of this bespoke design and it's fit within the sloping site, The Hayne would have almost no visual impact on the landscape, as shown in the visibility studies submitted.

The couple would work exclusively from home and would share a single electric car for occasional use, so traffic would barely be affected. Access to the site would be via the existing gate.

Neighbours and the community have been consulted throughout the development of the proposals and gained widespread support (noted that on the EDDC website, 10 compelling letters have already been received in favour of the project).

Central to the proposal is engagement with the local community, including schools, to facilitate students' hands-on learning about nature, biodiversity and positive action in the face of climate change.

Claire explained that ultimately, her family want nothing more than to be friendly, active members of this lovely Parish.

Claire expressed a hope that the Parish Council will see the merits of this project, welcome her family back to the community, and help put Colyton on the map as a place that (in keeping with the town's rebellious history!) pioneers new approaches to design, ecology and environmentalism.

Luke Sutton (Roderick James Architects LLP and project architect for The Hayne) then made his presentation:

He explained the principles of Paragraph 80 which resides in the National Planning Policy Framework and lists a number of exceptions to the general principle of avoiding isolated new homes in the countryside. Advised that Part (e) of Paragraph 80 is an exception where the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and,
- would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Luke explained that Roderick James Architects LLP have been working with the applicant and her family for five years alongside a committed team of designers, consultants and specialists across a range of environmental, ecological and natural building technology fields, culminating in the planning application for The Hayne.

He confirmed that what makes The Hayne exceptional is its response to the biodiversity crisis we face, noting:

- 13% of wildlife species in England are threatened with extinction (ref: 2019 State of Nature Report);
- 50% of hedgerows have been lost since the 1950s (ref: East Devon AONB);
- 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s (ref: Royal Botanical Gardens).

Luke advised we need to change the way we think about development in rural contexts explaining that whilst convention has been to strike a balance between development and biodiversity, what makes The Hayne exceptional is that it puts biodiversity at the forefront of the design process from concept through to implementation through to custodianship. In summary, The Hayne is an ecology-led design approach in response to a biodiversity crisis.

Luke noted that Colyton Parish Council have acknowledged the value of biodiversity in their Neighbourhood Plan. Also noted that CPC have commissioned their own biodiversity audit previously. Hence there is common ground between the aspirations of the project and the values of the Parish when it comes to promoting biodiversity in development. What The Hayne seeks to do is significantly raise the level of ambition to create an exemplar project for Colyton and East Devon. Advised that in his opinion this is just what Paragraph 80(e) is for; a vehicle to advance design and policy in order to make a better place and counter the environmental crises of our time.

It takes a team to realise a project of this nature:

- An applicant with a vision, willing to invest and commission something exceptional in a parish they love;
- Extensive analysis, reports and design work by a committed team of consultants, specialists and designers;
- It will ultimately require a skilled team of builders, makers and suppliers locally;
- At this stage particularly it needs the belief and support of a community who shares the aspirations of the project.

Finally Luke explained that Paragraph 80(e) projects (and those approved under previous iterations of this paragraph) are rare. To the best of his knowledge, there are four in EDDC, of which no two are in the same Parish and the last one was approved by EDDC in 2017. He hopes that the Parish Council will agree that The Hayne is exceptional and lend it their support.

Cllr Arnott confirmed that he would not vote on this application due to his position at East Devon but he wished to raise the issue of the history of the area, there was a huge campaign a little while ago for 10 - 20 affordable homes to be built up at Love Lane, Mrs Duthuits parents were instrumental in making sure this did not happen, stating that it was not a suitable site for families and no homes should be built up there. The campaign, mainly led by them got quite nasty. 10 - 20 affordable homes could have been build there for local families.

Mrs Duthuit stated that she was not aware of the campaign as she was out of the country at the time but she asked that consideration be taken for the high standards of environmental consultation and biodiversity of this design. Mr Sutton asked that this project be judged on its design merit and not any past history of the area.

**22/05/30 Appointment of Councillors to Committees: Finance, Planning, Amenities.** All Councillors wished to remain as they are.

**22/05/31 Nominations of representatives to other organisations**

- Axe Valley Ring & Ride – currently K Jones
- Community Woodland Trust – currently Cllrs Pady & Stenning
- DALC x 2 – currently Cllr Real & Hay
- P3 Co-ordinators – currently Mr & Mrs Bayliss, Mrs J List and Mr R Swan *all happy to remain in post*,
- Memorial Social Club x 2 – currently Cllrs A Parr & Stenning
- Parish Tree Warden – J Mair *happy to remain in post*
- Playing Field Committee x 2 – currently Cllrs Hay & Real
- St Andrews Church Fabric Committee – currently Cllr A Parr
- Friends of Colyton Library – currently Jane Dauncey *happy to remain in post*.

All Councillors were happy to remain as they are except Cllrs Hay and Real who both wished to come off the DALC representations as they don't feel it is a necessary post as nothing happens, it was agreed to leave this vacant for now. Cllrs A Mills and K Mills were asked to think about whether or not they wished to join one.

**22/05/32 Approval of the minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022.** Cllr Real proposed these be approved, seconded by Cllr Stenning and agreed by all.

**22/05/33 Matters arising from the Minutes.** Cllr Real asked about the quotes for the cemetery paths, the clerk confirmed one has been received. Cllr Pady said he is struggling to chase the other three contractors, meetings are being arranged but it is hard to get them to commit. Cllr Real proposed that a decision is made at the next meeting regardless of how many quotes are in.

Cllr Real then asked Cllr Arnott if a meeting between the Reece Strawbridge Committee and the Playing Fields committee has been set up yet to discuss the rainwater harvester tank. Cllr Arnott confirmed that it has been discussed during the RSYC meeting and that a further meeting will be scheduled.

Cllr Denny confirmed that the recently purchased signs have been put up in the relevant places but Mrs Dauncy was not consulted about putting the sign for the car park on her all. The clerk has emailed to apologise. He also confirmed that plans have been drawn up for Millfield and he will circulate to all Councillors plus Jason Goss and Phil Bayliss,

**22/05/34 Report from County Councillor – See appendix A.** Cllr Hartnell gave his apologies but sent it his report. Cllr Hay stated that two or three meetings ago he gave Cllr Hartnell a list of issues and requested a meeting, this has not happened yet. Clerk to chase this. Cllr Hay also commented on the standard of the two patches of tarmac which have appeared by Lishams Drain, he claimed it took 6 workers and two vans to do one small patch, why when the M5 can be worked on by two workers with two vans?

**22/05/35 Report from District Councillors** Cllr Arnott began by congratulating Cllr Parr on his position of Chairman and reminded him of the Councils Code of Conduct. Line 4 states: You must treat others with courtesy and respect, also line 5 which states: You must not bully any person (bullying may be characterised as any single act or pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour; an abuse or misuse of power or authority which attempts to undermine or coerce or has the effect of undermining or coercing an individual or group of individuals by gradually eroding their confidence or capability which may cause them to suffer stress or fear) Cllr Arnott stated that he experiences these things during Council meetings from one member of this Council and if he continues to speak to Cllr Arnott in that way then he must direct all conversation to him through the chair.

Cllr Arnott then read through his report – see appendix B.

Cllr Pady asked for information about the toilets, Cllr Arnott confirmed that a Zoom call is being held tomorrow between EDDC officers, Cllr Arnott, Cllr Denny, Cllr Stenning and the clerk. There will be a report back from this meeting. Cllr Real asked if the question could be raised about opening the loos for the Carnival night, Cllr Stenning also said about Monmouth Day. Cllr Arnott confirmed these questions would be asked.

Cllr H Parr stated how ironic it is that Cllr Arnott mentioned bullying as this is a serious problem at EDDC, there has now been a whole review of their Code of Conduct and a review into Council relationships which has cost £18,000.00. This was never a problem before the current administration took over, previous to this EDDC had been rewarded a Platinum reward for 7 years running which would never be received with bullying in the workplace. Cllr Arnott replied stating that he and his group are responsible for setting up the groups to deal with these issues.

Cllr Turner asked about the Council flat at Courtenay Drive which is STILL empty, this is simply not acceptable that a flat has remained empty since last July and there are other people who have nowhere to live in Colyton. Cllr Real stated that he knows a family with two young children who are about to be evicted through no fault of their own and EDDC won't help them until they are physically homeless. The system is seriously broken and urgently needs looking at.

Cllr Arnott agreed that changes are desperately needed, he confirmed that he has been in a meeting recently on this subject and they have been left with no doubt at all that change is needed. He stated that he had not heard of the case the Cllr Real mentioned, but there are too many identical stories happening. Cllr H Parr also mentioned that the house at Courtenay Drive is a Live West property so EDDC cannot force them to put people in there.

Cllr Turner stated that the whole issue does not make sense, people desperately need housing, there is an empty flat available and Live West are missing out on income. He also stated that the affordable homes proposed on the Ceramtec site are also too small and not what Colyton needs. Cllr Arnott confirmed that the plans for the Ceramtec site are not written in stone and there is still time for the Parish Council and EDDC to contest them. He stated that the number of Council houses which are sat empty are extremely low and there is usually a reason for them being empty for example damp.

Cllr Stenning asked when would there be feedback from the Housing Needs Survey. Cllr Arnott was unsure as this was run by Devon Communities Together.

### **22/05/36 Highway Matters**

- a) Ref TTRO2244682 Temporary prohibition of through traffic and parking. Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July between 0800 and 1800. Market Place, Vicarage Street and Silver Street for the Monmouth Rebellion Re-enactment.
- b) Ref TTRO2245122 Temporary prohibition of through traffic and parking. Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June between 1030 and 1500. Church Street for the Queens Jubilee Street Party.
- c) Excessive fly-posters along the A3052. Clerk has informed Cllr Hartnell who has emailed the group responsible to ask for them to be taken down, if this does not happen then he will escalate further.

d) Ref TTRO2245087 Temporary Prohibition of through traffic Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June – Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. South Street, Colyton. To access underground cabling.

**22/05/37 Report from Meetings Attended.** Cllr Hay has attended a meeting with the Playing Fields Committee, the decorating is continuing, the rain water harvesting tank at the RSYC is cause for concern, it has been pumped out but will refill. The issue needs solving. There are no Covid grants available so they need to raise all funds themselves which is hard. They are being forced to increase costs of venue and bar charges, these have not been increased for three years. Cllr Arnott asked if the Parish Council should be doing more to help the Pavilion and RSYC? All work done by volunteers and the buildings are ours. Is a meeting required? Cllr Real will bring this up at the next meeting.

**22/05/38 Letter received from Southleigh PC requesting a meeting to discuss Planning.** Cllr Denny explained that a letter has been received from Southleigh requesting a meeting to talk about planning applications, they get an awful lot of retrospective applications in, perhaps because they miss the EDDC deadlines for comment due to not meeting twice monthly? Cllr Parr stated that we would be open to a meeting, clerk to email their clerk to arrange.

**22/05/39 Suggestion from Cllr Denny of a possible location for a new footpath from Colyton to Colyford.** Cllr Denny explained his idea, to go from the top of the garages at Courtenay Drive, through the hedge, across a field (landowner would need to be asked for permission) and come out at Shells Lane. Cllr Pady proposed this be deferred to Amenities. This was agreed.

**22/05/40 Maintenance of Tennis Courts, including nets, posts, surface and perimeter slabs.** Cllr Pady explained that a group of Councillors met at the Tennis Courts during the week to inspect some defaults. It was decided that two new nets and four new posts are needed. Also the court needs sweeping and repainting. A path is also needed to enable access, Cllr Gardiner asked what the official recommendation is for the width of this path. Cllr Denny will confirm but he suspects it is 1.2m. Cllr Pady proposed prices for all of these things be gathered, seconded by Cllr Gardiner and agreed.

**22/05/41 Restoration of lamp at Queen Square including stone work. – Cllr Clifford.** Cllr Clifford explained that having spoken to a couple of builders, the general recommendation seems to be to put a metal frame inside the stone wall which surrounds the lamp to give it some protecting, Cllr Cliffords son Lee has volunteered to provide this free of charge. Then quotes will need to be gathered for the stone work, Cllr Pady to approach Jerry Down. Cllr Real proposed this all go ahead, with thanks to Lee, seconded by Cllr Pady and agreed. The clerk has chased DCC regarding the lamp and advised them of the date of the Jubilee Street Party as it would be nice to have the lamp back by then.

**22/05/42 Verge at Saxon Meadow still not reinstated.** Cllr Hay complained that the verge at Saxon Meadows has still not been reinstated, Cllr Turner also complained about a small stretch of pavement between the Tennis Courts and the new development which was damaged by workers parking lorries on it. Cllr Denny suggested writing to DCC to suggest that they do not adopt this highway until these issues are resolved. He will speak to a resident of the road to find out which department to write to and advise the clerk.

**22/05/43 Reece Strawbridge Youth Centre – CIO Incorporation.** Cllr Turner proposed that this go ahead, this was seconded by Cllr Gardiner and agreed. Cllrs Arnott and Hay abstained from voting.

**22/05/44 Ratification of a decision made during a site visit to the Picnic site to discuss the location of the Jubilee Tree.** 10 Councillors were present. Cllr Gardiner proposed it remain where it is, seconded by Cllr Arnott. A vote took place with 8 Cllrs in favour. Cllr Real proposed this be ratified, seconded by Cllr Clifford and agreed.

#### **22/05/45 Correspondence**

a) EDDC Covid 19 update

b) Rural Bulletin

#### **22/05/46 Finance**

Minutes of the meeting held Monday April 25<sup>th</sup> (Appendix A) to be noted  
Accounts to be approved for payment

**DD EDF electricity 7.50 VAT 1.50. Total 9.00 pounds.**

**DD Talktalk Phone and broadband 36.27 VAT 7.25. Total 43.52 pounds.**

**BACS Mr Fitzpatrick toilet caretaker. Total 120.00 pounds.**

**BACS R&H Signs 5 signs for Dolphin Street loo, 1 sign for car park, 1 sign for Queens Canopy 171.00 VAT 34.20. Total 205.20 pounds. BACS Glasdon 2 bins 288.56 VAT 57.71. Total 346.27 pounds.**

**BACS Halcyon Cemetery maintenance 526.75 VAT 105.35. Total 632.10 pounds.**

**BACS Biffa Waste management 133.96 VAT 26.79. Total 160.75 pounds**

The above accounts were approved for payment, this was proposed by Cllr Arnott, seconded by Cllr Gardiner and agreed by all.

- a) Handy man Salary. To be discussed during the Finance Committee meeting.
- b) Discuss arranging cover for Clerk duties when on holiday to include manning the office two mornings a week, attending to correspondence, taking minutes at meetings. Clerk to email Tracy Smith (clerk for Southleigh Parish Council) to ask if she could help.
- c) Confirmation of Receipt of 877.00 pounds from Mr Underdown for the rent of Cleeves Field. Noted.

## **22/05/47 Planning**

Minutes of the meeting held Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April – (Appendix B) to be noted

### **a Planning Applications**

**22/0777/FUL Moorings South Street Colyton** – Mr & Mrs Stone - Single storey rear/side extension to include a garage with loft space. Creation of new vehicular access to public highway. *Comments due by 25<sup>th</sup> May.* Cllrs Gardiner and Denny suggested a site visit is needed, clerk to arrange.

**22/0878/TRE Knowles Coly Road Colyton** – Mr Maclean - T1791, Oak: Crown raise to comply with Highways Act 1980. Maximum diameter of cuts 50mm T1793, Oak: Cut back Southern Crown aspect by 2.5m, cutting back branches approximately to vertical line off northern extent of small Yew near house. Maximum diameter of cuts 75mm T1795, Horse Chestnut: Fell Various: Crown lift any low branches overhanging driveway to provide 4m clearance. Maximum diameter of cuts 50mm Reason for Works: T1791 - Oak: To comply with Highways Act 1980. T1793 - Oak: Dominance over property T1795 - Horse Chestnut: Safety Various: Provide vehicular clearance over driveway. *Comments due by 26<sup>th</sup> May.* The Parish Tree Warden has suggested this would be good and necessary tree management. Cllr Stenning proposed this application be supported, seconded by Cllr A Mills and agreed by all bar Cllrs Hay and Arnott who both abstained.

**22/0817/FUL Land At SY 22647 92588 Colyton Hill Colyton (Landfill Site At Whitwell Farm, Seaton)** – Mr & Mrs Bennett - Siting of shepherd's hut for holiday accommodation. *Comments due by 27<sup>th</sup> May.* Cllr Real proposed this application NOT be supported, this is due to concerns over lack of water supply or foul draining with the potential to lead to pollution. This was seconded by Cllr K Mills and agreed by all bar Cllrs Hay and Arnott who abstained.

**22/0876/FUL Land Adjacent Love Lane Colyton** – Mr & Mrs Duthuit - The Hayne: Proposed new dwelling and wildlife habitat. *Comments due by 1<sup>st</sup> June.* Cllr Denny stated that the location of this application being outside the BUAB and above the 200ft contour line does go against both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, this should be put to one side for a moment and consider the merit of the Paragraph 80 status of this application. Cllr Parr stated that members of the Parish Council and volunteers have spent 6 years working extremely hard on the Neighbourhood Plan, this is the first application to go against it, and we cannot support it. Cllr Real stated that he was on the working party for the NP and has had years of the public pressing very strongly that the BUAB should be protected and that houses should only be built above the 200ft contour line if they are affordable homes, if the Council support this application they would not be doing the town justice. Cllr Pady stated that he supports young families wishing to live in this area and being close to their families. He also said he respects that a huge amount of work has gone into this application and that Paragraph 80 houses are very rare, he commented that this is a very special house. However it is outside the BUAB, and above the 200ft contour line and very sadly we should not support it. Cllr Arnott commented that a house has been built in Stockland under similar circumstances, it is a very special house and is in the middle of the AONB, it featured on Grand Designs. He did however comment that there was an attempt to build 10 – 20 affordable homes up at Love Lane and the parents of the applicant were instrumental in quite a nasty campaign wanting to get that stopped, they claimed that ‘the Green Wedge should be protected and not built on’ and that the site is ‘not suitable for families as it is far from the town’ so he claimed that there is an element of double standards here. Cllr Denny commented that 10 – 20 affordable homes would have a slightly different impact to the one being proposed here.

Cllr Stenning requested a site visit so the plans could be gone through in detail, Cllr Denny agreed.

### **b Planning Decisions – to be noted**

**22/0151/FUL Road Green Farm Colyton** – Mr Underdown - Roofing over livestock yard area. Approved with conditions.

**22/0596/COU Swan Hill House Swan Hill Road Colyford** – Mr Langford - Change of use from a mixed use as a guesthouse (use class C1) and a flat (use class C3) to a single dwelling house (use class C3) Approved.

### **c Planning Correspondence**

**To be noted**, planning application **22/0795/TCA Woodmans Stoup Swan Hill Road Colyford** this application was discussed during the previous Council meeting, it was decided to wait until our tree warden submitted his finding on the site. He has informed the Council that the disease is evident and he would recommend the tree be felled, therefore a comment or support has been submitted to EDDC planning department.

#### **22/05/48 Amenities**

- a) Minutes of the meeting held Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April (appendix C) to be noted.
- b) Gaps in Picnic Site hedge. This will be deferred to the amenities committee meeting.
- c) Concrete posts at PMPF entrance crumbling. This will be noted during the Parish Inspection.
- d) Policy for tree planting up at the Picnic Site. Cllr K Mills proposed that no more trees be planted up at the Picnic Site unless a tree dies and needs replacing, seconded by Cllr Arnott and agreed by all.
- e) Confirmation of the date and time for the Annual Parish Inspection, Monday 30<sup>th</sup> May 7pm.
- f) Date for meeting at Nunsford Lane – 18<sup>th</sup> May (pm) 19<sup>th</sup> May (any time) 20<sup>th</sup> May (am). It was suggested Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 10:30. Clerk to liaise with DCC.

#### **22/05/49 Matters to be taken into Committee.**

**22/05/50 Items brought to the CPC's attention after the agenda had been published.**

#### **22/05/51 Dates of future meetings**

- May Committees – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May
- Annual Parish Inspection – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> May
- CPC Full meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June.

**Meeting closed: 21:05**

## ***Appendix A***

### **Annual Report by Cllr Marcus Hartnell Devon County Councillor for Seaton & Colyton**

#### **Roles & Responsibilities 2021/22 Devon County Council (DCC)**

- Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee (CIRS)
- Investment & Pension Fund Committee
- East Devon Highways & Traffic Orders Committee
- East Devon Locality (County) Committee Community Safety Partnership

#### **Constituency Activity**

I represent the following communities:

- Seaton (Town Council, East Devon District Council & Devon County Council)
- Colyton & Colyford (Devon County Council)
- Southleigh, Northleigh & Farway (Devon County Council)
- Offwell & Widworthy (Devon County Council)
- Beer & Branscombe (Devon County Council)

As a tri-hatted Councillor I have helped many constituents over the past year. The most common requests are related to highways matters and it is also the most frustrating. The overall condition of our roads has improved in recent years however a combination of reduced budgets and rising costs will mean that the next financial year will be very challenging. I continue to make regular inspections with the local Highway Officer and with local Councillors. This is proving to be more effective than holding traffic group meetings. I have supported Southleigh Parish Council to enable repairs to the foundations and retaining wall near Turners Court to protect the road from subsiding. This project was jointly funded by Southleigh Parish Council, DCC Community Enhancement Fund and my locality budget. I have supported applications from Colyton, Colyford & Beer for 20mph speed limits to improve road safety and continue to push for safety improvements on the A3052 through Colyford and the A35 through Wilmington & Offwell.

The final planning and delivery stages of the multi-use trail (Stop line way) in Seaton between the Cemetery and White Cross Farm are progressing. The Compulsory Purchase of land is complete with initial survey and design work being undertaken now in readiness for the autumn when work will commence clearing vegetation. Completion should be in 2023.

Along with my fellow EDDC Ward members I have been involved in discussions covering the future development of the Moridunum and Seafront improvements, the next steps for the Seaton Jurassic Visitor

Centre and the Joint Axe Valley Levelling up bid. All three of these items dovetail between EDDC & DCC and are ongoing.

In my role of EDDC Councillor I did not support the increase in parking charges to £2 per hour across many East Devon coastal car parks, and I am concerned what impact this will have. As many households will be feeling the squeeze from increased energy and food prices, the amount of consumer discretionary spend will reduce accordingly. There is a real risk visitors will park for shorter periods which will hit our shops and businesses, jeopardising the post Covid economic recovery. As County Councillor I am concerned that these price increases will create parking problems in other areas, as those who are not prepared to pay these extortionate prices will use on-street parking to the annoyance of residents.

On a more positive note, I was pleased to propose the role of a Disability Champion for Seaton. This role will assist Seaton Town Council with its decision making, ensuring when decisions are made consideration is given to people with disabilities. I am pleased to have pledged £1k of my locality budget towards rubber matting for the beach at Seaton, enabling wheelchair users to have access onto the pebbles.

About my Locality Budget – please bring forward projects/proposals where you require top-up funding to deliver. Guidance can be found at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/democracy/councillors-nav/localitybudgets/>

Best Place – Devon County Council Plan 2021-2025

The DCC strategic plan up to 2025 can be viewed online.

The plan focuses on how we will help the county to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, build on the resilience of local people and communities to create a fairer, healthier, and more caring place, and grasp the opportunity to create a greener, more prosperous and inclusive future for all. The best place - Strategic Plan (devon.gov.uk)

Committee work All County Committees are meeting in person at County Hall and meetings are also recorded or live streamed for public viewing.

The CIRS committee has overseen the 3-year extension of the Milestone highways maintenance contract, input into the new council plan, the budget, rural road safety and speed policy, as well as received regular Highway's performance stats and ongoing updates in relation to Covid-19.

The Investment & Pension Fund Committee is responsible for the £5bn Devon pension fund. The work of the committee is to receive regular reports on investment strategy and policy, climate change impact, audit, and ongoing training for members. Of particular interest is the committee decision last year to divest passive investments in companies with exposure to fossil fuels and mining. As a result, 25% of the total pension fund is now invested in a Passive Climate Transition Benchmark (CTB) fund.

My first year as your Devon County Councillor has been really fulfilling and enjoyable. I have enjoyed meeting and getting know many Town & Parish Councillors across the division, and through attending many of your meetings beginning to understand the challenges faced, which vary from broadband provision to potholes and everything in between!

Over the coming year the Council faces budgetary pressures in all services, with inflation and demand for services being the most significant. The Highways maintenance budget will be challenging and the pressures from both funding and increasing costs will mean tough choices. To assist with tackling some of the minor works that are important to communities but often don't get prioritised, I'd like to advocate the Road Warden Scheme. This is a formal agreement between Devon County Council and a town or parish council, which enables them to deliver minor works in or around the public highway. Work can be carried out by a qualified Road Warden volunteer. I plan to complete Road Warden training myself and encourage at least one member of each Town/Parish to do the same. Works we can then tackle as volunteers are Pothole repairs (when they do not meet the county council's intervention criteria); clearing weeds; cleaning signs; cleaning drainage (gully grating); cutting grass; repairing finger posts; cutting hedges and vegetation; managing verges for wildlife and with Chapter 8 training and setting up and managing road closures for special events. I believe this approach will make each community more resilient and empowered. More details will follow in my monthly reports.

I very much look forward to working with Councillors, Town/Parish Clerks, and residents over the coming year to assist with your priorities and to support each community, ensuring you are informed, supported, and prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

Cllr Marcus Hartnell  
April 2022

## *Appendix B*

### **District Report Cllr Paul Arnott May 2022**

#### Resignation of Neil Parish

The constituency has found itself at the centre of national headlines, and I won't rehearse here the reasons for Mr Parish's resignation, other than to recognise its absolute necessity, and to acknowledge that it was done in a timely manner which might be an example to others.

Some months ago, a meeting was fixed for the Friday morning of the day the story broke, between me, as Leader at EDDC and our CEO, and with Neil Parish MP and Simon Jupp MP. A first-rate agenda on matters of concern for the people of East Devon had been produced from the council end, and all was set fair. Mr Jupp gave a late apology.

From the agenda the following action points were agreed:

- Mr Parish was to endorse our bid to government under the Levelling Up fund for major works on Seaton seafront, industrial units in Seaton, and regeneration projects in Axminster.
- He said he would personally fight on for the missing £1.6 million his and Mr Jupp's government promised they would help the council with two years ago if we kept LED running through the pandemic.
- He was going to work with us on the phosphate pollution into the River Axe which has led Natural England to say no more homes in Axminster can be built until that is mitigated. As a farmer, with all the problems of leaking slurry lagoons and fertiliser run offs from fields, he would have been a considerable figure in all this.
- We appealed to him to have a word with government about the huge strain put on a district council when it is suddenly asked to distribute energy rebate payments via the means of the council tax system.
- We asked, yet again, to help with a change to housing policy, especially what happens if we graft to create new social housing only for it to be privately purchased within a few years.

As Leader of EDDC I should advise that as a result of events later that same day there are consequences to his resignation. All those critical bullet points above are left nowhere now. In particular, for the Seaton and Axminster bids to be submitted they urgently needed a credible local MP's signature. What a waste of our council's time, and quite probably what losses for the entire community.

#### Former District Councillor John Humphreys.

East Devon District Councillors have voted to commission an independent report to investigate the circumstances of how former Conservative Councillor John Humphreys came to be nominated and bestowed the award of an aldermanship in December 2019. The motion approved by councillors at the East Devon District Council (EDDC) Full Council meeting on Wednesday 20 April stated:

That the Council commissions an independent report by the Local Government Association or the Centre for Public Scrutiny or another appropriate independent body to be expeditiously brought to Cabinet to provide a clear understanding how John Humphreys, despite his arrest in May 2016 continued to serve as a Councillor until May 2019, retained his position as 'Lead Member for Exmouth' and went on to be bestowed the honour of an alderman by this Council in December 2019.

In particular the report will focus on the circumstances of how John Humphreys came to be nominated and bestowed the award of an aldermanship despite being under criminal investigation at the time.

The Council will put on hold the remainder of the scrutiny recommendations (on the future of appointing alderman and alderwomen) pending the receipt and consideration of the independent report by the Cabinet.”

EDDC’s Chief Executive will prepare a report for consideration at a future meeting of the council’s Cabinet in June 2022.

Since that decision, Simon Jupp MP has stated that for two months around the General Election of 2019 he was a guest at a flat owned by Humphreys in Exmouth.

The press have asked further questions of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon and Cornwall Police, and the Local and National Conservative Party.

#### Energy Rebate as distributed via East Devon District Council

More than £5million has been paid out to 75 per cent of the eligible East Devon residents, living in an A, B, C or D band property. The first phase of the £150 council tax (energy) rebate was rolled out in April – seeing payments made to more than 34,000 direct debit holders.

The second phase of the projects will see letters sent to all other eligible residents from today, Monday, 9 May).

An online claim will soon go live allowing all residents who do not pay their council tax by direct debit, including those whose bank details EDDC was not able to verify, to claim their rebate.

Residents will need to meet the following conditions, as of 1 April 2022, to apply:

- Their property is banded A-D or band E with a disablement reduction
- They are liable to pay council tax at the address
- The property is their sole or main residence

In order to safeguard against fraudulent claims residents will need their council tax account number, which can be found on the top of a council tax bill, along with the unique access code that will be in their letter.

If you have lost your council tax bill you can request a copy through [EDDC’s website](#) as this cannot be provided over the phone.

EDDC will have more than 12,000 claims to process so has asked residents to check the [EDDC website](#) to get the latest information including FAQ’s and to report any changes before calling.

The council has also asked anyone who can go online to do so, so officers can keep phone lines free to help vulnerable residents.