

**Ward Report to Whimble Parish Council  
18 September 2023**

Owing to the Summer break, this report covers the period since my last report in mid-July.

**District Updates**

- EDDC Cabinet have approved a plan to develop proposals for the first new council houses to be built in East Devon for many years, with a series of modular, zero-carbon, 'ZedPod' homes currently planned for a brownfield site in the centre of Honiton
- Cabinet have also recommended adoption of a 'Nature Recovery Declaration', together with a stepped plan to implement new nature restoration duties placed on the District Council by the Environment Act 2021
- Two reviews, one of new car parking charges introduced in the last few years, and another of East Devon's system of public bin provision, are currently underway; the former to understand what impacts, if any, changes to the charges may have had on tourism/businesses as well as residents, and the latter as part of a multi-stage process to review what types of bin are provided, where, and for how much, as well as to improve the financial viability of the discretionary service going forwards
- East Devon are later this year undergoing a 'Corporate Peer Challenge' under the guidance of the Local Government Association, as part of which questions regarding how the District works with Parish Councils on a variety of issues are expected to be asked; while direct consultation with Parish Councils may well be undertaken as part of this, to ensure I can make sure any such feedback is properly heard, it would be helpful if the Parish Council could **advise of any feedback/comments that they would make on the subject**

**Ward & Parish Updates**

- I have received a number of complaints from residents regarding the safety of Slewton Crescent Play Park, including of problems with rusted/sharp edges and incomplete/damaged surface treatments; these have been raised with East Devon's engineer team, who are actioning in-house the making-safe of equipment and have instructed an external contractor to undertake works to improve the surface
- I am receiving an increasing number of reports regarding the poor state of various country lanes around the village; Grove Road, Lilypond Lane, and Broadclyst Road have all been reported to me more than once recently. I have sought to raise the issue direct with Devon Highways, to little success, and I understand residents have had similar experiences
- I have also received reports from residents regarding an ongoing rat infestation centred on the stream running through the centre of the village adjacent to the railway line; this has been reported to Environmental Health and I am monitoring the situation
- The planning appeal by public inquiry regarding Marsh Green Solar Farm has been ongoing over the past week, and is due to conclude this Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September; I have been involved extensively with residents of Marsh Green in administering the group's participation in the inquiry as well as producing written evidence on the group's behalf, and I will myself be testifying as an expert on the group's behalf tomorrow, 19<sup>th</sup> September
- Work on the emerging East Devon Local Plan continues; in late August, I and other members of Strategic Planning participated in a workshop to develop an updated vision for the plan, at which I have pushed heavily for appropriate recognition of the value of rural East Devon and the need to ensure its conservation and protection from large-scale development

- As part of the development of the Local Plan, any allocations of development in the Parish will need to ensure they appropriately consider any infrastructural constraints that affect what development can come forward, and what improvements may be required in order to facilitate such development – while I am very clear that I am in no way proposing that Whimble *volunteers* for this, as part of this month's Ward Report I would like to make the suggestion that the Parish Council consider undertaking a review of this to inform both the emerging East Devon Local Plan and upcoming Whimble Neighbourhood Plan; any such review of constraints will also be extremely helpful to me in representing residents' views and the reality of constraints within the Parish should any proposals be made
  - It may assist to lean on the type and priority categories contained within the East Devon Infrastructure Delivery Plan Review 2017 as a framework for this discussion, should the Parish Council wish to proceed with one (see Section 4 of [https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2270747/idp-review-2017\\_report.pdf](https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2270747/idp-review-2017_report.pdf))

### **Correspondence shared with the Parish Council**

Since my last report, I have passed on correspondence with regards to:

- Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner's Office – a new Victims of Crime website has been launched at <https://victimcare-dc.org>, which the PCC's Office have requested support in distributing information regarding
- Devon County Council 'free trees' programme – a programme by the County Council to support decarbonisation and nature recovery efforts by Parish Councils; the deadline for this year's applications is Wednesday 27 September – see <https://devon.gov.uk/environment/trees-and-woodland/emergency-tree-fund> – and the Parish Council may wish to consider applying to support environmental improvements at the Parish Field and elsewhere, perhaps as a collaboration with Whimble Primary School or the Whimble & District Garden Association
- Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner's Office – a survey exploring how crime is affecting rural communities, which the Parish Council and residents may wish to complete; find out more at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RuralDC>