

**Member Champion – Rural
Name: Philip Skinner**

Key activities involved with since 2009 annual council/appointment

Been in touch with Cllr Malcolm Florey regarding access to courses for young people living in isolated places, with plans to involve the Cllr Iain Chubb as Youth Champion.

Have given a talk to the South West Rural Affairs Forum with Corporate Director, Karime Hassan on the pressures of planning in rural areas, touching on broadband issues. Communication, particularly, in rural areas needs to be 'fit for purpose' and meet modern expectation. Together with the Communications Portfolio Holder and the ICT Team I am trying to address the natural and local issue of inadequate broadband speeds and width. Work had been undertaken with the Community safety and Data Quality Champion to streamline the town and parish council e-mail system, which have now been standardised to help the public contact their local council. There is potential and support to roll this initiative across the whole of Devon.

Have taken up the issue of food security in a number of places, including the Devon Conservation Forum, Chairman of CPRE and South West Rural Affairs Forum, all of which showed great support for the promotion of local foods.

An article on the role of the Rural Champion has been placed in the Council News Round-Up, which is circulated to the towns and parish and editors of parish magazines.

I have been helping the Council's drive to identify potential land for affordable housing due to the critical shortage and established need in the district. Improvements in provision are now being achieved.

I have been working closely with the Economy Portfolio Holder, Business Champion and the Council's Economic Development Manager to identify potential employment land. The viability of the district relies heavily on a vibrant economy and a working population. Promotion and helping to facilitate our local economy is of great importance.

Conferences/Workshops - if attended and their benefits

I was a guest speaker at the South West Rural Affairs Conference. I spoke on communications in rural areas to the annual meetings of the town and parish councils at Knowle and helped drive the standard e mail addresses agenda.

Partnership Working:

As above I have worked with the Business and Young Persons Champions, Portfolio Holders relevant outside bodies and organisations as well as Officers – particularly Karime Hassan, Corporate Director and Nigel Harrison, Economic Development Manager.

Future plans – what are your aims/work programme for the year to come:

I aim to continue working to help improve the rural economy, rural communications and rural affordable housing within East Devon.