

Axminster Neighbourhood Assessment Summer 2007

Partnership working

Environmental Health recently carried out a joint venture with the Police to find out whether the residents of Axminster have any concerns about their town, and whether they think Axminster is a good place to live.

Environmental Health staff, community wardens and a local Police Officer carried out a door to door survey on over 200 properties in and around the town centre on 18th and 19th June 2007. There was also a drop in surgery held on 28th June at Axminster Guildhall.

27% of the people interviewed reported no complaints.

They said they were happy with their environment and thought Axminster was a great place to live.



What comments or complaints did we receive?

Dog Fouling

A number of people reported a problem with dog fouling in Vale Lane and the Leat footpath. These have been passed on to the dog wardens who have started patrolling the area more frequently and will be keeping a close eye on the footpaths and carry out regular spot checks. If you are aware of anyone who lets their dog foul this area please contact the dog warden service on **0845 6010211**.

Pigeons

Many residents were concerned about the pigeons roosting near Boots in Trinity Square. The pigeons sit between the spikes and their droppings pile up on the road below, in spite of regular cleaning by Streetscene. Environmental Health Officers have now contacted Boots who have employed a pest control company to survey the area and have agreed to carry out any repairs necessary to further pigeon proof the building.



Rats

Rats were reported by the residents in Castle Hill and Vale Lane and our Pest Control contractors are dealing with any problems in this area. If you have a problem with rats in the district please contact **0845 6010211**.

Early Morning Noise

Some residents were bothered by the noise from early morning deliveries at Tesco. The complaints have been logged and Environmental Health Officers are in the process of investigation and have requested Tesco's policy relating to deliveries.

Car Parking

There were several requests for residents parking or free parking in EDDC car parks for business owners. In order for this to be introduced a representation would need to be made to Council Members, but it is thought to be unlikely to be introduced. If you wish to contact your local Councillor about this matter, you can find details on the Council's website www.eastdevon.gov.uk.

Rubbish Collections and Recycling

Many people said they were worried about the proposed fortnightly collections of household waste, although they would like to recycle more items, such as plastics and cardboard.

The Council are looking at many alternative schemes, including the latest proposal for a service that should meet everyone's needs, including those who had concerns about fortnightly waste collections.

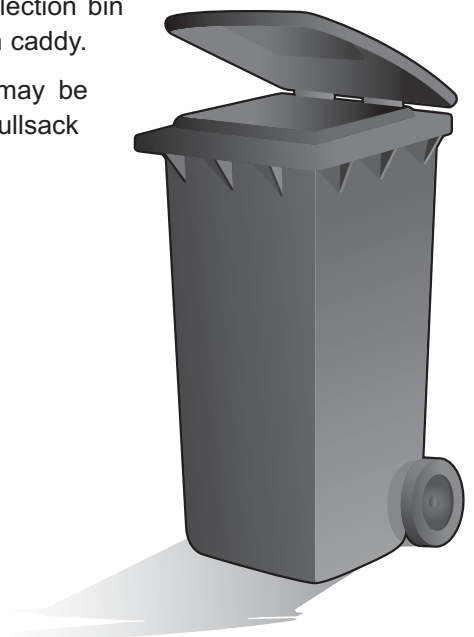
The following recommendations have now been proposed:

- Weekly collections of kitchen waste
- Weekly collections of a wider range of recycling materials including plastic bottles
- Fortnightly collections of other household waste

The scheme has now been agreed by full council and the pilot scheme for approximately 12,000 households will start in the autumn and will incorporate all of the features mentioned above. By taking the smelly items away weekly, householders can concentrate on sifting other waste into two compartments. We want people to recycle as much as possible – both for the sake of the environment and to help us meet our targets. The success of the scheme will depend on full public participation.

Residents will be issued with a 140 litre wheeled bin, 25 litre curbside food collection bin and 9 litre kitchen caddy.

Some residents may be given a 140 litre gull sack as an alternative.



Noise And Vandalism

Noise from youths in and around South Street, North Street and Castle Hill appears to be a common complaint in the late evenings. Many people asked for more police on the beat in the town and more police patrols at night. These requests and complaints have been logged and passed on Devon & Cornwall Police to deal with. There are other concerns about noise from the town centre pubs and these are being monitored by Environmental Health.

There were also a few minor incidents of vandalism to cars and flower pots which seem to happen in the early hours after the pubs close. Additional cctv cameras were suggested as a solution to these problems around the town centre. If you see or know of any crime or vandalism please contact Axminster Police Station on **08452 777444**.

Slippery Path

The elderly residents of Poplar Mount said the steep rear path behind their flats becomes slippery from green moss as the area is constantly in the shade. Following their concerns, the path has been swept and cleared by the Council's Estate Management team.



Streetscene

A broken street sign was reported in Vale lane, Streetscene have now replaced this with a new sign.

There were complaints about litter from takeaways not being cleared by rubbish collectors. They should clear this litter and the operatives will be reminded of their duties. Any further problems please report directly to Streetscene on **01395 517528**.

A bin had been removed from the corner of North Street and Castle Hill due to domestic waste being placed in it regularly. Many people asked for this bin to be replaced as takeaway packaging and litter was being left in the street. This bin will now be replaced at the end of July. Great news!



Youth Club

There was a request for a drop in centre or similar for the older youths of the town. Devon Youth Services say the youth centre is open 3 nights a week for junior (11/12) intermediate (13/14) and seniors (14/15/16), and they will be re-assessing the age ranges to try to attract more of the 15 and above age range in the near future. If you'd like more information about Youth Clubs in Axminster phone **01297 32820**.

Speeding

The residents of Castle Hill and Musbury Road would like the speed restrictions enforced as they are worried about speeding traffic in these areas. Their concerns have been passed to Axminster Police who are considering targeting hot spots and increasing patrols. Many residents in Musbury Road said how pleased they were with the new road and pavement works carried out recently.

Saving Energy

If you would like help or advice about the grants available for cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing and help with heating systems, please contact Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on **0800 512012**. Several people who live in



listed buildings in Musbury Road were concerned that they could not replace their draughty sash windows and do their part to save energy. The Council's listed building Officer, Kate Baxter-Hunter contacted them to offer advice about secondary double glazing and any other options which may help, whilst retaining the original sash windows.

Smoking

The Smoking Education Officer visited licensed premises and restaurants in the town offering advice and literature just prior to the smoking ban came into force in July.



Grumble Walk

The Council's Streetscene section organised a Grumble Walk and was attended by Streetscene, Environmental Health, local Police and Councillor Hull. The following are some of the issues raised by Councillor Hull.

Concern about HGVs driving through the centre of the town's narrow streets, request to investigate possible restrictions – Axminster Town Council to investigate width and height restrictions.

West Street Car Park – a disabled access ramp was requested for the West Street access – Request has been refused due to excessive cost as disabled access is already available for car park via main entrance.

Websters Garage site – concerns over the safety of the roof. – Building Control have confirmed it is under investigation and on a regular survey list but currently poses no risk.

Who changed the name from Castle Steps to Symes Lane? The Steps name has never been officially changed and is not a recognised address point.



Request to replace the litter bin on the corner of Old North Street and Castle Hill. Bin is being replaced shortly (see page 3).

Several issues were raised concerning the paths around the overgrown Mill Leat area behind Tescos. This is being looked at and letters will be sent out to the responsible persons asking them to cut back and maintain the area where required.



Weeds outside the town jail – details passed to Devon County Council.

If you have a further comments on the neighbourhood assessment please call Debbie Fletcher or Andrew Ennis on **01395 571570** or email at dfletcher@eastdevon.gov.uk or call **01395 571570**