

# Environmental Health neighbourhood assessment



## Aylesbeare Winter 2009



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“ *I love living here and my neighbours are wonderful* ”

“ *There’s a good community spirit* ”

“ *It’s quiet and peaceful but really convenient to Exeter* ”

Environmental Health organised a neighbourhood survey in the village of Aylesbeare in January 2009. They worked in partnership with Officers from Ottery St Mary Police and carried out a door to door survey throughout the village. Consultation was part of a district wide initiative to raise awareness to residents in more remote village locations about the services which are available. They also enquired whether residents had any comments about the Council’s services they receive and whether they had any concerns or complaints about their neighbourhood. Advice and information about many services available were offered including a home security check and fire prevention assessment.



91% of householders interviewed said they enjoyed living in Aylesbeare and approximately 90% said they were satisfied with the Council’s services they received. The main areas of concern in the neighbourhood were as follows.

## Waste and recycling

A number of residents expressed a desire for plastic and cardboard to be included in their recycling collections and many were concerned that more wasn’t recycled generally in the district.

Weekly recycling collections were introduced in the east of the district in 2008, which includes plastic bottles and food waste. This service is planned to be extended across the district as soon as possible.

One resident who requested assistance to remove her garden waste has been forwarded details of the garden waste collection service. Sita can deliver 5 green garden sacks at a cost of £6, which can be used when required. Once full, these sacks can be placed out with the regular collection.



StreetScene were praised by a resident who was unable to manage her bins and had requested some help. She described the assisted collection service as excellent.

Putting out refuse prior to the collection day was causing a litter nuisance to some residents as the bags are ripped open by vermin. Householders are asked to put refuse out on the day of collection only.

Several people agreed how useful the recycling bins were in the Aylesbeare Inn car park.

One lady said she found the steps difficult to negotiate in the Bowd recycling centre. This is run by Devon County Council (DCC) and the staff are advised to offer assistance if requested (tel. **0845 155 1010**). However Exmouth and Sutton recycling centres have easier access with ground level access.

A resident asked for help to remove a bath from their property. Details of East Devon District Council’s bulky items collection service were provided, where items can be collected for a fee of £45. To request this service please telephone **01395 516551**.

# Speeding

A number of residents expressed concern about speeding vehicles travelling through the village in excess of the 30 mile per hour speed restriction. Some asked for speed checks to be implemented by the Police and for the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit. All comments have been referred to Ottery St Mary Police, who said they encourage members of the local community to report specific incidents of poor driving, such as speed or vehicle obstructions and said all specific cases will be investigated.

# Dog fouling

There were several complaints about dog fouling in the village and the worst affected areas were reported to be the grass banks in Village Way and the church yard.

The Council's Enforcement Officer has been visiting the areas to investigate the complaints and will continue to carry out patrols in plain clothes on various occasions. An offender can be prosecuted which could lead to a fine of up to £1000, or they may be offered a fixed penalty (currently £50, soon to increase to £80) for a first offence.

The Council is in the process of introducing a Dog Control Order, which will make it an offence to allow a dog to foul any land to which the public have access and increase the fixed penalty to £80. More information on the Dog Control Orders can be obtained on the website at [www.eastdevon.gov.uk/dog\\_wardens](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/dog_wardens).

Alternatively, anyone who witnesses dog fouling can report the offence to East Devon District Council on **01395 517457**.

Several residents suggested installing a dog bin in the village. If the Parish Council wish to consider this option, they could make a formal request to StreetScene, who can provide the costs for supplying and emptying a dog bin at an agreed location in the village.



# Litter

A number of people were annoyed by the thoughtless depositing of litter in hedges, car parks and gutters. All complaints were passed to StreetScene to assess, together with a complaint about a slippery pavement which they have been asked to clean. There was also a request for the street cleaners to visit the village more frequently, which has been passed on to StreetScene.

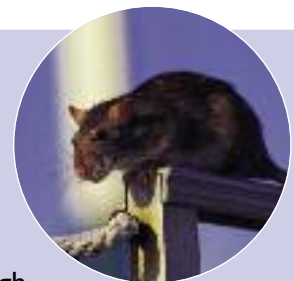
Many people reported that litter was created by Sita during the weekly refuse collections. Some said they failed to clear up split bags and dropped recycling items. StreetScene are in discussions with Sita to ensure operatives clear up all waste and leave the area in a clean condition. StreetScene can be contacted on **01395 517528**.

# Rats

Rats had been sighted by a small number of people around the village although no one reported an infestation. Some people felt bird food could be encouraging rats into their neighbours' gardens.

You may be encouraging rats if you do not ensure bird feeders are secure and any spilt seed or nuts are removed. Cooked food should not be added to compost heaps and it is advisable to use a secure refuse container with a lid.

If you are concerned about rats around your property, the Council offers a pest control service through Rentokil at a reduced cost of £23.50 per treatment. Please call **01395 571517** to discuss problems in your area or call **0845 6010 211** to request a visit from Rentokil.



# Energy Efficiency

Complementary low energy light bulbs were distributed to many householders and all residents were asked about their heating methods and insulation.

Details were distributed about the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre who offer excellent advice on local schemes, free and discounted insulation, draught proofing and hot water tank insulation.

Of the properties visited 27% of residents believed they required additional loft insulation. 81% had double glazing, whilst only 38% had cavity wall insulation.

42% requested more information and the contact details of Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre.

Residents were asked about their various heating methods and although the majority of homes used oil central heating or electric heaters, a number reported having only solid fuel open fires.



The Council has recently announced the launch of Devon Warm Zones, a three-year project that aims to help households across the region cut their fuel bills, reduce carbon emissions and improve their health, through the use of energy efficiency measures. More information about the Devon Warm Zones scheme and the assistance they may be able to offer is available at [www.devonwarmzones.org.uk](http://www.devonwarmzones.org.uk) or from the Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on Freephone **0800 512012** or at [www.devon-energy-advice.co.uk](http://www.devon-energy-advice.co.uk).



## Would you like to know more?

For more information call Warm Zones free on **0800 512 012** or visit the website at [www.devonwarmzones.org.uk](http://www.devonwarmzones.org.uk).

## Crime and security

Residents said they felt safe living in Aylesbeare and reported very little crime or antisocial behaviour. Many thought there was a good sense of community within the village. However a few incidents, some of which related to benefit fraud, were highlighted. These are now being investigated by East Devon District Council.

The Police asked residents whether they were concerned with the security of their properties, and a number of residents requested a free home security assessment by the Police. To request an assessment please call **01395 571570**.

## Fireworks

There were a few complaints about fireworks within the vicinity and some people enquired about the rules regarding the control of fireworks.

It is important to balance the wish to use fireworks with the community's right to peaceful enjoyment of their lives.

The Fireworks Regulations 2004 makes it an offence for any person to use 'adult fireworks' between the hours of 11.00 pm and 7.00 am, except for permitted fireworks nights, which are 5 November up to 12.00 midnight, Diwali up to 1.00 am, New Year's Eve up to 1.00 am and Chinese New Year up to 1.00 am

The penalty for this offence is a maximum fine of £5000, six months imprisonment, or both. Misuse of fireworks may also amount to a breach of the peace where fireworks are being let off at an unreasonable hour of the night. Problems should be reported to the police.



## Streetlights

The location of a faulty streetlight in Village Way has been forwarded to Devon County Council. One householder was concerned that the light was on during the day and only working for one hour at dusk. A request has been logged with Devon County Council to investigate and restore the correct timing for the street lamp.



## Aylesbeare Inn

Several people expressed their praise for the Aylesbeare Inn, and hoped that with continued support from the local community the pub would continue to provide a much valued social facility. It was described as a vital resource for the neighbourhood.



# Fly tipping

Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of waste, typically in areas such as roadsides, lay-bys or on private land. During the survey a complaint was made about a quantity of tyres in a field in the vicinity of Blind Lane.

All reports of flytipping are investigated by StreetScene and they will investigate this complaint to establish whether this was a fly tip incident. StreetScene are responsible for the removal of flytipping from East Devon District Council property, Devon County Council highways, roads, pavements and lay-bys. However the removal of flytipping from private property is the responsibility of the land owner.

Nationally, it is estimated to cost £100-£150 million every year to investigate and clear up flytipping, which poses a threat to humans and wildlife and damages our environment.

If you wish to report a fly tipping incident, please call East Devon District Council in confidence on **01395 517528**.



# Devon County Council

There was some concern about the ditch outside Randlehayes, as it was believed that storm water had exposed electrical cables in the ditch. Devon County Highways inspected the area and reported that the part that was visible was the warning tape and not the actual cables. The cables are the responsibility of the utility companies and a representative from Devon County Council contacted British Telecom and Western Power Distribution to inform them. They said that there is no immediate danger but the matter is being investigated and will be resolved as soon as possible.

There were also concerns about the road surfaces in Minchin Lane and Church Close. They have been inspected by DCC who said that they found no substantial defects in Minchin Lane to currently warrant repair. However there were problems in Church Close where surface water has caused icy spots on the road and DCC confirmed that a scheme has been submitted for substantial repairs to

be carried out for the coming financial year. The proposed date for this is at present pending financial approval by DCC.



Details of the Care and Repair scheme were discussed with residents during the neighbourhood assessment. This home improvement agency can offer advice, support and help to the over 60s and people with disabilities. They can make home visits to assess the need for repairs, improvements or adaptations and 15% of residents asked for more information about this service.

Care and Repair also offer a 'handyperson scheme' which provides assistance with small repairs, whilst ensuring that work is done professionally and at a reasonable cost. Many residents were unaware of the handy person scheme which can help with an assortment of small repairs around the house. For more information and help, please call **01395 514790**.

# Fire Safety

During the survey 94% of residents consulted confirmed they had at least one working smoke detector. Offers of a free home fire safety visit by Devon & Somerset Fire Service were distributed and a number of householders have requested this service. The home visit is available to anyone who wishes to improve fire safety within their home.

A Fire Officer will visit the property to carry out a short assessment and may be able to supply a smoke detector.

If you would like to request a home safety visit please call Freephone **0800 7311 822** or text Info Line on **07800 002 476**.



An application for an additional attached dwelling in Bramble Mead has recently been approved. This will provide one additional affordable home within the village.

One Council tenant made a request to downsize to a smaller property, as they now live alone in a three bedroom house. Their request for a smaller residence to suit their current needs has been forwarded to

Housing Needs, who are now awaiting for a suitable property to become available.

If you would like to know more about the Downsizing Scheme, which can pay up to £1,100 to help with the costs of relocating to a smaller property, please call **01395 517469**.

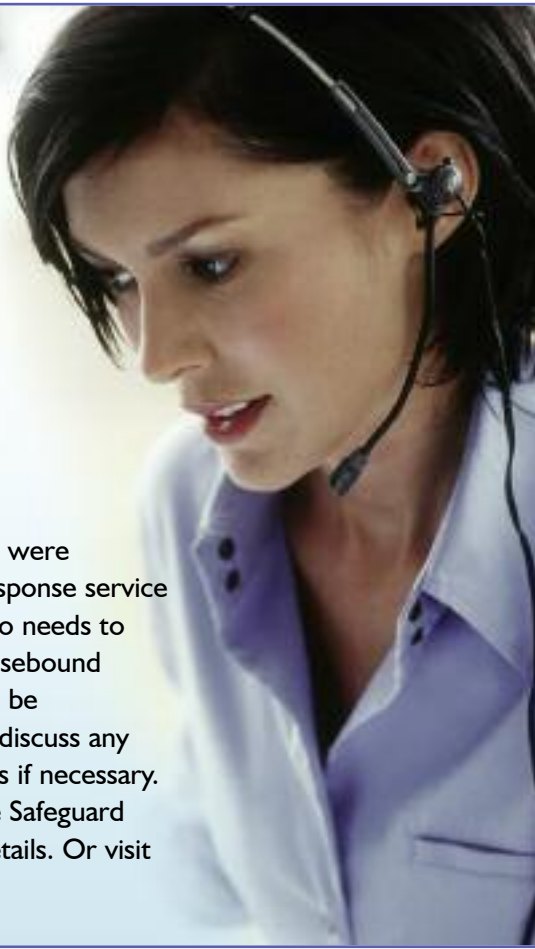
# Housing

There were requests to provide more affordable homes for locals within the village. The Parish Housing Needs survey results will be available in the spring and these will be fed back to residents via the parish magazine.



## General Fire Safety Advice

- ✓ Maintain smoke alarms, change batteries annually and test weekly.
- ✓ Do not leave candles and tea lights unattended.
- ✓ Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
- ✓ Switch off and unplug electrical appliances last thing at night.
- ✓ Do not leave washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers on at night.
- ✓ Close inside doors to slow down the spread of fire.
- ✓ Turn heaters off and put up fire guards last thing at night.
- ✓ Plan an escape route for all the family and keep exits clear.
- ✓ If a fire starts, keep low where the air is clearer and get out without rescuing valuables and stay out. Call **999** as soon as you are clear of the building.



## Help and peace of mind

Details of the Council's Home Safeguard scheme were distributed. This 24 hour personal emergency response service is based in Sidmouth. It is available to anyone who needs to summon help urgently, such as vulnerable or housebound individuals. It allows residents to call for help and be immediately linked to staff in Sidmouth who will discuss any problems and call relatives or emergency services if necessary. If you would like to know more about the Home Safeguard service, please call **01395 519739** for further details. Or visit [www.eastdevon.gov.uk/homesafeguard](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/homesafeguard).

“ *There's a great community spirit with plenty to do if you get involved* ”



## How to get in touch

If you have further comments on the neighbourhood assessment please call Debbie Challice or Andrew Ennis on **01395 517457** or email [dchallice@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:dchallice@eastdevon.gov.uk).

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