

Environmental Health Neighbourhood Assessment



'YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND YOUR HEALTH'

Beer

Winter 2009/2010



www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Environmental Health carried out a Neighbourhood Assessment in Beer in February 2010. They worked in partnership with Seaton Police and together carried out a door-to-door survey in the village, as part of a district-wide initiative to raise awareness about services available to residents.

The team 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.

A representative from The British Red Cross joined the team to promote a life saving course to be held in the village. Residents were also offered a Police home security check and a fire prevention assessment. An open surgery was held on the same day at The Mariners Hall, where Environmental Health staff were available all day to take enquiries and many people called in to discuss their concerns.



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Officers from Environmental Health and the Red Cross at the open surgery at the Mariners' Hall

Over the last year the Environmental Health Service has dealt with various issues in Beer, including:

- four pest control complaints including two rat sightings, one bees nest and one seagull concern
- five consultations on the environmental impact of proposed developments arising from both planning applications and building control applications
- four alleged noise nuisance from amplified music
- two alleged noise from machinery and DIY
- two alleged barking dog complaints
- four food hygiene requests for services and advice
- 23 routine food hygiene inspections
- two complaints about smoky bonfires
- two housing condition complaints and 1 house in multiple occupation advice
- three complaints concerning dog fouling in public areas
- one advice regarding keeping chickens
- one radon advice
- one local authority assisted funeral

Hundreds of properties were visited during the Neighbourhood Assessment and approximately 60 residents were interviewed by the teams. 81 per cent of those spoken to said they were satisfied with the services they currently receive from EDDC and the main areas of concern within the village were as follows in this newsletter.



Waste and recycling

Many residents praised the new refuse and recycling collections, and a few expressed a wish to have cardboard included. The current trucks do not have the capacity to take cardboard, but once the service has been rolled out across the entire district by the end of 2010, further recycling options can be considered, depending on costs. Meanwhile residents are advised to either store up cardboard and take it to the recycling centre when passing, or put cardboard in their landfill bin. Small amounts of cardboard can be home composted.

There were several complaints about recycling bins being left in the road without their lids after collection. These comments were passed to StreetScene who contacted SITA's managers to ensure their operatives leave bins in the right location, replace lids and clear up their spillages.

Some residents felt the Council's large item collection charges were too high and could lead to an increase in fly tipping in the area.

During the snow in winter, several residents said they were unable to obtain correct information about the refuse collections. Whilst up to date information was on the Council's website, many people highlighted the fact that that they do not have internet access

and so are unable to obtain the relevant information to some services.

StreetScene can be contacted on 01395 517528 for more information and to report any refuse or recycling problems. Full details of all refuse collection days can also be obtained at any time on the Council's website at www.eastdevon.gov.uk/my_neighbourhood.

Dogs

A large number of residents raised the problem of dog fouling throughout the village, with the worst affected areas said to be the beach, Cliff Field Car Park and the public footpaths. Some residents thought dogs should be banned entirely from the beach and others said visitors' dogs may be responsible for the majority of fouling.

All details of the comments received have been logged and the Council's Enforcement Officer and Dog Warden have visited the village on various occasions to patrol and speak to dog walkers. A new Dog Control Order came into force across East Devon on 1st October 2009. It is now an offence for any person in control of a dog to fail to clear up after it, on all land to which the public have access. The only exception is Forestry Commission land. If anyone witnesses dog fouling in a public place, they are asked to report it to Environmental Health. An Enforcement Officer will then contact the owner of the dog and a Fixed Penalty Notice with a fine of £80 may be issued for a first offence. Further offences or failure to pay the penalty ticket could result in a fine of up to £1000.

Some residents asked for more dog bins to be provided throughout the village, especially around Underleys and Peco. Additional dog bins can be supplied and emptied by StreetScene, if formally requested and paid for by the Parish Council.

Please call Environmental Health on 01395 517457 for all dog related concerns.



Police issues

Most residents said they were not concerned about crime in the area and felt Beer was a safe place to live with a good quality of life. Residents were offered a free home security check and several householders requested this service.

The greatest concern to some residents was speeding traffic and heavy lorries through the village and the sheer volume of traffic in the village in summer. One resident said speeding through Causeway was especially bad and suggested Police speed checks could be carried out in early mornings and around 5 pm which were reported as the worst affected areas and time.

It was reported that cars were frequently parked on both sides of Clapps Lane which caused congestion and poor visibility. There were other comments about inconsiderate and dangerous parking throughout the village.



A small number of people had concerns about minor vandalism to properties in the village, and one resident was concerned about under-age drinkers attempting to get served in the local pubs. Some thought it would help if there was more for young people to do in the evenings. There were also complaints about joy riders driving cars around Cliff Field Car Park on summer evenings.

All comments and concerns were forwarded to Seaton Police who said 'the Seaton Neighbourhood Team would like to reassure residents that they will robustly police the district and will pay particular attention to the areas highlighted in the assessment'. Crime continues to be very low in the area and last year Beer had the lowest number of crimes reported for several years.

If you wish to discuss any issues PC Steve Speariett can be contacted on 01297 626727 or directly by email at Stephen.speariett@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk. You can also keep up to-date with news from your parish by visiting the Seaton Rural Police website – just type *Seaton rural* into Google.

Potholes

Many people complained about the condition of the roads and the amount of potholes that have appeared since winter. The worst affected areas were said to be Long Hill, Clapps Lane, Higher Meadows and Fore Street. One resident said she had fallen because of a pot hole and was in touch with Devon County Council about her injuries.

These concerns were passed to Devon County Council Highways Superintendent for their comments and their spokesman said “gangs of Highways repairmen are working across Devon full time, repairing potholes on the main routes into settlements. Following completion of emergency repairs on the main A and B road network, which carry 80% of traffic in the county, other repairs will be carried out. Rapid response teams are repairing small and medium size potholes, to make the highway as safe as possible. Defects over one square metre requiring a more permanent repair will be dealt with by other properly equipped teams”.

If you wish to report a pothole please call Devon County Council on 0845 155 1004 or email them on eastareahm@devon.gov.uk.



Building control

When residents were asked whether they had any concerns regarding buildings or ongoing building work in the area, one resident had concerns about an unstable wall between two properties. Full details were passed to Building Control to carry out an assessment.

If you wish to speak to an Officer about building works or structures in the area please call Building Control on 01395 517482.

The British Red Cross

The British Red Cross is helping communities to help themselves by coaching and mentoring First Aid Educators to spread the knowledge within their own communities.

During the survey the Red Cross representative asked residents whether they would consider attending a first aid course in the village, and around ten residents expressed an interest. A first aid training course is hoped to be organised in the Mariners Hall. This training may also include the new REDiPlan home emergency planning session, which helps people to plan ahead for emergencies.

If you are interested in taking part in a Red Cross life saving course, please call Pamela Willerton on 01271 327918 for further details.



First aid tip for burns

In minor burns cases, cool immediately with cold running water or harmless liquid. Do not touch the burn or apply lotions. Dress the burn loosely if needed, cling film is excellent. Seek medical aid if burn is larger than one inch.



Litter

The majority of people questioned felt the village was very clean and well kept with very little litter around. Kevin, the Parish Council's street cleaner was highly praised by a number of people, many commenting on what a marvellous job he did.

StreetScene's REACT operatives were also in the village carrying out a litter pick around the hedges and road sides during the Neighbourhood Assessment. These intense village clean-ups are carried out twice yearly. There were a small number of complaints about beer cans and litter being left outside properties adjacent to The Dolphin pub, but this was considered a greater problem in the summer with the number of visitors to the village.

There were concerns about litter being left on the beach and there were calls for the beach to be cleaned more regularly. StreetScene clean Beer Beach as and when they receive reports of litter and the cafe owners carry out litter-picks around their sites.



Planning issues

Some people said they felt EDDC ignored the parish plan and felt there was a lack of consultation with local people over planning issues at times. One resident was concerned that a property was being renovated prior to planning permission being granted. Their concerns were forwarded to our planning section who confirmed that these internal

works did not require planning permission in themselves, so could be done in advance of permission, although until permission is granted any works will be at the applicant's risk.

All planning concerns and comments were forwarded to the Planning section for their information. For enquiries and further information on Planning please visit the EDDC website at www.eastdevon.gov.uk or call 01395 571595.



Fire Safety

During the door to door survey residents were offered a free home safety visit by Devon and Somerset Fire Service, and five householders requested this service. A surprising number of residents said they did not currently have a smoke detector in their property, some wrongly believed they did not need one because they didn't smoke or have open fires.

A fire safety 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, give advice and may be able to supply and install a free smoke detector.

If you would like to request a free fire safety visit, please call Free phone 0800 7311 822 or text Info Line on 07800 002 476.

Pests

Rats had been sighted in the village by a small number of residents. Details of EDDC's pest control service have been supplied to anyone who requested treatment. EDDC offer East Devon residents a pest control service for pests of public health significance.

This service is provided on the Council's behalf by Rentokil Initial Plc. Many pests can be dealt with and the treatment for rats is available at a subsidised rate of £23.50 per treatment.

To request a pest control treatment please call the EDDC switchboard on 01395 516551, or to discuss any pest problems in your area please phone 01395 517457.



Photo © Reg Mckenna



Miscellaneous

Environmental Health Officers have been told about noise complaints at The Dolphin, including groups of noisy customers outside the pub last summer. It is known that a busy pub will always have some effect on the local neighbourhood, but residents also need to make allowances for the fact they live in the vicinity of a popular pub.

It is always a case of balancing residents' rights to relax and sleep in their own homes with the legitimate expectations of other residents and visitors to enjoy musical entertainment and social gatherings at their local pub. The Council will assess the seriousness of any problems, and will then weigh up whether any action needs to be taken to restore that balance.

Some residents raised East Devon District Council's car parking charges as a concern and thought they were too high. It was suggested parking could be free for local residents in the winter.

There was a request to reinstate the street light next to the Jubilee Shelter for security in the winter. This cast iron street light was removed by EDDC for repair, but



Details of the Care and Repair scheme were discussed with residents during the Neighbourhood Assessment and several people requested more information. 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.

Care and Repair also offer a 'handyperson scheme' which provides assistance with an assortment of small repairs around the home, whilst ensuring that work is done professionally and at a reasonable cost. Many residents said they were unaware of this scheme and information leaflets were requested by nine residents in the village.

A resident who requested assistance with a stair lift and shower has been referred to Care and Repair.

For further details about assistance from Care and Repair please call 01395 514790.

a spokesman from StreetScene said the funds are no longer available to carry out the repair, so it will not be replaced.

Additional grit bins were requested in Park Road for use in icy weather and Devon County Council confirmed they have now installed another bin in this area.

Many people felt there were too many holiday homes in the village, others called for more for young people to do.

One resident asked whether boat owners have allocated spaces and numbers on the beach like beach huts and it was suggested boat owners could be means tested for their beach mooring charges. A Spokesman from StreetScene said boats are allocated various areas of the beach to use according to their class and use. Beer Sailing Club also has an area allocated for their use.



Energy efficiency

Advice and information were offered to households about the energy efficiency grants available. The Cosy Devon Scheme offers free or greatly discounted loft and cavity wall insulation to all homeowners and private tenants. Many residents requested contact details and application details.

The Devon Energy Efficiency Advice Centre offers advice on grants and assistance available to improve heating for eligible householders. This may include updating boilers and installing central heating. They can be contacted on 0800 512012 or at 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.



“
People take great pride in the village and Kevin, our Community Cleaner, does a wonderful job at keeping the place clean

“
I wouldn't wish to live anywhere else

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.

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