

The Knowledge



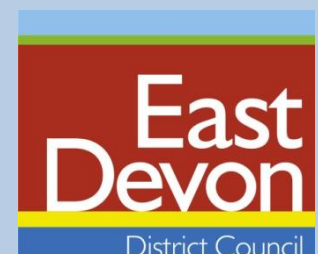
Photo by Stan Fifer

4 December 2009

This week in The Knowledge

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Meeting	DSO	Date	Time	Location
Licensing & Enforcement Sub-Committee	CL	Tuesday 8 December	9.30am	CANCELLED
Assessment & Hearings Sub/Review Sub-Cttee	CEH	Tuesday 8 December	10.00am	CANCELLED
Development Management Committee	CEH	Tuesday 8 December	2.00pm	Council Chamber
Manor Pavilion Management Steering Committee	CEH	Tuesday 8 December	6.00pm	Committee Room
Local Development Framework Panel	HJ	Wednesday 9 December	9.30am	Members' Area
Exeter International Airport Consultative Group	CL	Wednesday 9 December	2.15pm	Exeter Airport
Computer Surgery		Wednesday 9 December	4-6pm	ICT Training Room
COUNCIL	DV	Wednesday 9 December	6.30pm	Council Chamber
East Devon Business Forum	CL	Thursday 10 December	6.00pm	East Devon Business Centre
Asset Management Forum	CL	Monday 14 December	9.30am	Council Chamber
Licensing & Enforcement Sub Committee	CL	Tuesday 15 December	9.30am	Council Chamber
Planning Inspections Committee	CEH	Friday 18 December	TBA	Council Chamber



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Knowle
Sidmouth
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Democratic Services Officers:

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Would Councillors please pass their apologies to Democratic Services if they are unable to attend a meeting so that post can be sent or withheld as appropriate. Please don't forget to check your pigeon holes whenever you are visiting Knowle. If you would like a copy of the papers relating to any of the above meetings, please contact the relevant Democratic Services Officer. (All the above meetings are at Knowle, unless otherwise specified).

Click [here](#) to view agendas and minutes on the Council's website. Click [here](#) to view planning applications online.

Executive Board: 2 December 2009 Members are notified of the following decisions

	Item	Decision
103	<p>Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees</p> <p>Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 28 October 2009</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 18 November 2009</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> that the following decisions be noted: Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes 18, 20 Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Minutes 22, 23 that the recommendations of the Committee be taken into consideration when the issue was discussed later in the meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Minute 21 that the following recommendations be approved: Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minute 17 that the following recommendations be referred to Council: Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minute 19 Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Minutes 22, 23
106	<p>East Devon Local Development Framework: Annual Monitoring report – Key decision</p>	that the Annual Monitoring report be endorsed for submission to the Government Office for the South West and made available for viewing/downloading free of charge on the Council's web site and for inspection or purchase in paper format.
107	<p>Financial Monitoring report 2009/10 – Month 7</p>	that the variances identified as part of the Revenue and Capital Monitoring process up to Month 7 be noted.
108	<p>Department for Transport Consultation paper</p>	that Diccon Pearse, Corporate Director, prepare a response to the Department of Transport's consultation on the concessionary travel special grant allocations to local authorities for 2010/11 to reflect the detail in the report and the points raised at the meeting.
109	<p>Defra 96k Grant for Individual Flood Protection</p>	that the recommendation for Rockbeare to receive the £96k grant be noted with monies for this work to be made available to enable the works to be carried out prior to reimbursement by Defra.
110	<p>Pennington Point – Cliff Erosion review</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> that the conclusions and recommendations of the Consultant's report (including the requirement to make periodic surveys of the cliff and beach) be accepted and used as a useful database to assist with future decisions on the management of the frontage and assess future risk to the eastern town of Sidmouth; the need for future budgetary provision for the survey work of approximately £10k was noted;

continued/...

	Item	Decision
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. that sources of funding be explored to enable a further report (Project Appraisal report) to be commissioned to take into consideration the outcomes of the Pennington Point study in 2001 and the Environmental Statement developed in 2002, with this report forming part of a submission to Defra requesting approval and funding for a programme of works or a scheme which would give better protection to the Town of Sidmouth from the consequences of continued erosion of the cliffs east of Sidmouth ; the need for budgetary provision for this report of approximately £40k was noted.
113	Performance Monitoring April – October 2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the performance and proposed remedial action against the performance indicators identified in the report for the 2009/10 financial year until September 2009 be noted; 2. that consideration be given to adjusting the performance reporting of those services which have benefited from a systems thinking review to measure the extent to which improvements in performance have been embedded within the organisation.
114	Absence Management – Quarterly report (quarter 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the information relating to absence and the actions being taken to reduce current high levels of absence be noted; 2. that a future report includes any trends within departments and any additional interventions that could address the current absence rates.
115	Investors in People (IiP) action plan and progress	that the progress made against the Council’s Investor in People action plan be noted.
116	Local Democracy – work with local schools/colleges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the Council’s involvement in Local Democracy Week and the positive feedback from the participating schools/colleges be noted; 2. that a cheque be awarded to the student council, or equivalent student body, of each school/college which participated in Local Democracy Week this year with the stipulation that the students themselves decide on how the money is to be spent and that they let the Council know the result of their decision; 3. that the Council continues to support the involvement of young people in initiatives to promote their interest in local democracy with the Democratic Services Team, in consultation with the Youth Member Champion, actively seeking ways to increase and progress this involvement.
117	Shared Services – up-date	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the contents of the report be noted and the potential benefits that could be derived from sharing services be endorsed; 2. that the Council actively identifies potential opportunities for the sharing of its services.

	Item	Decision
120	Working in Partnership with a Neighbouring District Council – Shared Services	that the principle of the Council contracting the services of Karime Hassan, Corporate Director, to Exeter City Council on a part-time 9 month basis from April 2010 be approved with the Chief Executive being given delegated authority to agree the details of this arrangement.
122	Seaton Regeneration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the contents of the report be noted and the progress that has been made towards the delivery of the Council’s longstanding commitment to comprehensive regeneration in Seaton be welcomed, 2. that the content of the report on representations received following the advertisement of the disposal of public open space under the Local Government Act 1972 be noted, 3. that the Principal Estates Surveyor be authorised to settle the final terms of a conditional land agreement between the Council and Tesco Stores Ltd (TSL) for (inter alia): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The grant of an easement in perpetuity, comprising a right of way over land at the Underfleet, Seaton in favour of TSL and the owners and occupiers of TSL’s landholding to the north of Harbour Road Seaton for all purposes connected with the use of that land, together with rights of entry onto the land for the purposes of constructing and maintaining landscaping and footpath works; and b) The transfer to the Council of an area of marsh land to the north of TSL’s land, identified on the plan attached to the report and known as Sheep’s Marsh (the “Land Agreement”),
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. that the Principal Estates Surveyor be authorised to settle final terms of a section 106 agreement between the Council (as landowner) (i) Devon County Council (ii) and TSL (iii) in respect of the Council land over which the easement will be granted and containing obligations on the Council to keep the footpath link over this said land to the Underfleet open, 5. that the completion of the land transfer of Elizabeth Road Playing Fields to Seaton Town Council as a contribution to plans for improved youth facilities be noted and £80,000 of the capital receipt from the Land Agreement be authorised to be held in reserve 2010/11 to contribute to match funding a project led by Seaton Town Council to improve youth facilities and/or provide a youth club, as yet to be determined most appropriate by Seaton Town Council, 6. that the progress of the Seaton Visitor Centre and Cycle Hub project be noted with a presentation to be given by the Exmouth & Seaton Interpretation Centre Board setting out the business case and sustainable management plan to a future meeting of the Executive Board, 7. that £1,830,000 of the capital receipt to be received under the Land Agreement be authorised to be committed to the Seaton Visitor Centre and Cycle Hub Project and held in reserve for a minimum period of three years from receipt, Continued/...

	Item	Decision
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. that the Council act as the client body for the appointment of contractors and consultants for the Visitor Centre scheme development design and build, 9. that the Principal Estates Surveyor be authorised to enter into negotiations with the Exmouth & Seaton Interpretation Centre Board for the grant of a leasehold interest in land owned by the Council to the Exmouth & Seaton Interpretation Centre Board or an operating agreement, in either case given Exmouth & Seaton Interpretation Centre Board sufficient locus to secure future grant funding, 10. that, on the basis that TSL and Seaton Town Council provide match funding, a contribution of £45,000 over three years be authorised to appoint a Town Manager with the Seaton Regeneration Board overseeing the partnership working and details regarding the governance structure between the respective bodies, 11. that, it be noted that, in addition to the significant investment the Council has already put into the Axe Wetlands project to date, a further area of land known as Sheep's Marsh, be also transferred to the Council to further the delivery of the project by TSL as part of the land transaction, 12. that Seaton Town Council's recommendation for interim accommodation at Seaton Tram Company for the Tourist Information Centre during the construction phase of the Visitor Centre be confirmed, 13. that signage (Option 3) for directing the public to public conveniences during the construction phase be approved 14. that an analysis of the future costs associated with the regeneration of Seaton be prepared for consideration by the Executive Board.
123	<p>Grant Funding Agreement Low Carbon Infrastructure Fund for Biomass Combined Heat and Power/District Heating Scheme at Cranbrook</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the Chief Executive be authorised to enter into a Low Carbon Infrastructure Fund Funding Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency for a grant of £2,580,000 towards the delivery of a biomass Combined Heat and Power Plant to provide low carbon electricity and district heating for Cranbrook, 2. that the Chief Executive be authorised to enter into a supplementary Funding Agreement with the Energy Provider (Eon) to enable them to draw down grant payments for eligible expenditure, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the original grant and Funding Agreement.
124	<p>Exeter and East Devon New Growth Point Funding Update and Grant Funding Agreement for Clyst Honiton Bypass and Cranbrook Multi Purpose Building</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the following total DCLG awards to date for the Exeter and East Devon New Growth Point be noted: 2008/09 - £1,252,000 capital and £250,848 revenue funding 2009/10 - £3,041,594 capital and £274,461 revenue 2010/11 - £2,048,414 capital (indicative) and £273,956 (confirmed) 2. that the following Allocations be confirmed from the total capital Growth Fund Allocation for the period 2008/9 – 2010/11 (as amended by the proposed cut in the capital fund for 2010/11 and subject to confirmation by DCLG)

Executive Board: 2 December 2009 (continued)

	Item	Decision
		<p>a) £4.5m to contribute towards the cost of construction of the Clyst Honiton Bypass (CHBP);</p> <p>b) £1.5m towards the construction costs of the Multi Purpose Building and</p> <p>c) £300,000 towards the cost of the design and tender package for the CHBP and Cranbrook Main Local Route.</p> <p>3. that the Council be authorised to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Cranbrook New Community Partners for grant payments to be made for the above projects and to approve amendments to that funding up to the full amount shown in the above Allocations, the detail to be approved by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the portfolio holder Strategic Planning and Regeneration.</p>

The above decisions will become effective on 10 December 2009 at 9.00am unless "called in". The published procedure for a "call in" is on pages 133-135 of the Council Constitution , or contact Democratic Services for assistance or explanation. Recommendations by the Executive Board to Council are not included above, as they are not subject to "call in".

Chairman's engagements

Monday 7 December

Vice Chairman to attend the launch of the Polar Expeditions programme at the University of Plymouth.

Wednesday 9 December

Chairman to host Christmas reception and present Long Service Awards, Best Kept Village Awards, and Licensing with their Customer Excellence Award at Full Council. Following this, Chairman to host a Christmas reception for Members.

Thursday 10 December

Chairman and Mrs Liverton to attend a reception and Christmas Draw at Kennaway House, Sidmouth.

Friday 11 December

Chairman and Mrs Liverton to attend the Teignbridge District Council Civic Luncheon.

Vice Chairman to attend a special celebratory event to mark the completion of Network Rail's £20 million project to construct an additional 3 miles of track at Axminster.

Proposals for new nuclear power station



EDF Energy are considering proposals for a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C (in Somerset) and have started formal pre-application public consultation. The first stage of consultation about initial proposals and options for the development of Hinkley Point C will run until 11 January 2010. East Devon District Council has been invited to respond but it is not envisaged that there will be a formal Council response.

More details of the consultation can be viewed at: <http://hinkleypoint.edfconsultation.info/>

Matt Dickins (Principal Planning Officer - Planning Policy)

☎ 01395 571540 (or Ext 1540) mdickins@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder's decisions

Decision put to Portfolio Holder A decision will be published in a future edition of The Knowledge

Economy

Peter Halse

Increase in charges for Knowle, Sidmouth; Elizabeth Hall, Exmouth and Town Hall Seaton

The Increases in charges shown below are agreed for 2010/11. A new charge for Saturday boot sales at Elizabeth Hall is introduced.

Hire charges for Knowle, Sidmouth, 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

	Charges *		
	Morning or Afternoon	Evening	All Day
	£	£	£
Council Chamber - Meetings, Coffee Mornings and similar, including use of kitchen for coffee/tea only	97.50	126.50	224.00
Parties, Dinners, Dances, Suppers and Wedding Receptions - (Inclusive charge for Council Chamber, Kitchen and Committee Room)	163.00	222.00	385.00
Committee Room	37.50	60.00	97.50
Supplementary Charges			
Supplementary usage	After midnight £36.50 per hour		
Deposit	A 20% non refundable deposit is required with the Completed Application form, in accordance with Special Condition 18 of the Application form		
Commercial Rates	Add 100% of the above charges plus VAT		
Set up Rates	If set up of the function is required on a Friday evening for the Saturday event, a charge of £54.50 will be applied.		

* Charges for non-commercial use includes VAT at 17.5%

Hire charges for Seaton Town Hall, 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

Seaton Town Hall	Charges *			
	Morning or Afternoon	Evening	All Day	Weekly
	£	£	£	£
Main Hall	42.40	69.00	153.80	661.00
Upstairs Lounge/ Committee Room	21.75	27.00	70.50	301.40
Supplementary Charges*				
Concessionary Hourly Rates	Main Hall – (Monday to Friday mornings) Main Hall – evenings (2 hours minimum) Committee Room/Upstairs Lounge Monday to Friday evenings only		£18.25 per hour £24.65 per hour £9.80 per hour	
Additional charges after 11pm	£20.00 per hour or part thereof			
Cancellation Charge	100% of the hire charge when less than three months notice is given and 50% of the hire charge when more than three months notice is given, if premises cannot be re-let.			
Commercial Rates	Add 100% of the above charges plus VAT @ 17.5%			
Bank Holidays and Dances	Add 100% to standard charge (or plus an additional 'All Day' rate if a weekly booking includes a bank holiday) (subject to EDDC being able to obtain staff to cover the event)			
Hire of electronic piano	£11.35 per day			

* Charges for non-commercial use includes VAT @ 17.5%

Continued/...

Hire charges for the Elizabeth Hall, Exmouth, 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

All charges are inclusive of VAT at 17.5%.

All Rooms and Kitchen (no cutlery available)	£	Gardens	£
Morning or Afternoon	38.90	Use of gardens with hall	38.90
Evening	62.20	Use of Gardens only	70.00
All Day and Evening	101.00		
Weekly Rate (Monday to Saturday)	404.10		

Disco/Dance/Wedding Receptions	£	Supplementary Charges	£
Non-Commercial (in addition to above charge)	101.00	After 23.00 hrs	£18.70 per hour or part thereof
Commercial (in addition to above charge)	202.00	Bank Holidays	Add 100%

	£
Car Boot Sales/Fetes (Use of main hall, kitchen and gardens all day)	139.00
Car Boot Sales (Use of main hall, kitchen and gardens Saturdays in summer)	91.70
Commercial Lettings (Use of main hall, kitchen and gardens all day)	Add 100%
Use of Electricity In Gardens (All appliances connected to the supply must bear a current PAT certificate)	25.60
Conditional Deposit (Where appropriate) refundable upon satisfactory inspection of premises (see Condition 22)	125.60
Deposit for one-off hires for parties, discos and wedding receptions (see Condition 22 on application form)	311.00
Cancellation Charge: 50% of hire charge if premises can be re-let; 100% of hire charge if not re-let	

Further details: Brian Kohl, Property Services Manger, Ext 1585

Find out more about funding

► Wide range of funding

The Foyle Foundation has grants available of between £1,000 and £10,000 for smaller charities working at grassroots level across a range of activities. Click above for more information or ☎ 020 7430 9119

► Broadband



The South West RDA (Regional Development Agency) has funding available to spend on pilot projects that will lead to improved broadband access for rural business and communities

in the region. Ideas are now being sought for a limited number of pilot projects that will provide high speed broadband access for rural areas that are losing out in broadband coverage. The closing date for applications is 15 January 2010.

► Technology



Abilitynet adjusts and adapts the technology of voluntary organisations that provide ICT services to individuals or

communities with disabilities. Click above for more information or ☎ 0800 269545.

► Basic services

Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) have funding available to support Community and Social Enterprises to help those delivering or wanting to deliver basic services.

Jamie Buckley (Engagement & Funding Officer)
☎ 01395 517569 (or Ext 2769)
jbuckley@eastdevon.gov.uk

Thelma Hulbert Gallery closure and relaunch

Advance notice to those intending to visit the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Honiton in the new year:

Please be aware that there will be no public access to the gallery from January 2010 until late May 2010. This is to facilitate refurbishment of Elmfield House. The grand reopening of the expanded Thelma Hulbert Gallery will be held in late May 2010 on a date to be announced. The expansion will allow for a larger exhibition space, a designated learning room, tea and coffee facilities and a shop, and in future the opening hours are to be extended to Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm.



Photo: cushions (detail) by Julie Murdoch-George

Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Elmfield House, Dowell Street, Honiton EX14 1LX
Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 4pm • Free admission • Wheelchair accessible
☎ 01404 45006 or thelmahulbert@eastdevon.gov.uk

The gallery's current exhibition, *Present Makers 09*, runs until 4pm on Christmas Eve and provides an excellent opportunity to see and buy the work of top designer-makers from the South West. Make the most of your last chance to visit the gallery for several months! As with previous *Present Makers* exhibitions, you will find a varied and delightful array of charming, elegant, or sometimes just a little bit quirky work. The current opening hours are Wednesday-Saturday 10am-4pm.

News from the Rural Services Network (RSN)

▶ England's vanishing rural services

Nearly half of all rural people have seen key amenities close during the last 5 years, reveals a poll. The survey is likely to fuel fears that traditional village life is in terminal decline as families are priced out of rural areas. It found that 45% of rural people had seen shops, schools and pubs close in their village or market town since 2004.

▶ BBC highlights village shop plight



The BBC is highlighting ways rural communities can come together to combat village shop closures. Ambridge, the fictional village home of *The Archers*, has opted for community-ownership to save its shop and post office. Before airing the radio show, producers worked with the Plunkett Foundation, which helps set up and run community-owned shops

▶ Rural poor 'miss out on services'



Poor rural families are missing out on services often taken for granted in towns and cities. Disadvantaged rural residents frequently receive little or no primary healthcare, continuing education or childcare. Impoverished families are also more likely to suffer from unemployment, suggests a study for the Commission for Rural Communities.

▶ Fund to kick-start rural housing

Local authorities wanting to build affordable rural housing can now apply for Government funding. A £1m Government fund aims to kick-start plans to build homes so people can afford to live where they want. The fund was among a number of measures unveiled on 26 November.

Note: Members of RSN (which includes Councillors and Council staff) can gain free and full access to RSN Online by registering.

News from the IDeA (Improvement and Development Agency)

► Relaunch of 'Prevent' resource

Read new pages on the national Prevent strategy, which aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism. Explore the latest information on IDeA support and good practice. Keep tabs on the resource, as over the coming months new case studies will be added, along with monthly articles and news from the online community. These updated pages coincide with the launch of new materials from Communities and Local Government and other Prevent partners.

► Safeguarding children and young people: scrutiny guide



The IDeA and Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) have published a new guide to help overview and scrutiny committees fulfil their critical role in relation to safeguarding children. The guide is designed to assist both councillors and officers in shaping and developing local safe services.

► 2009 local election candidates survey



Read this year's comprehensive survey of local election candidates and compare the types of people that contest elections across the range of local authorities. Does the issue of social diversity on council benches remain a challenge? Find out and discover whether under-representation affects all types of authority.

► Research to support local government

The latest Local Government Association Analysis and Research bulletin includes reports on workforce challenges, how to engage young people in productive activity, attitudes to age in Britain 2004-08, city recovery in Europe and the United States, and the impact of recession on deprived neighbourhoods.

News from COSMIC

COSMIC's Chief Executive Julie Harris has recently been recognised for her excellent work in support of local businesses and organisations at two high profile events.



On Womens Enterprise Day as part of the celebrations by Women of the West, the Institute of Directors and the South West RDA, Julie was awarded as a female entrepreneur for her work targeting young people, older people who have 'missed out', and people in remote areas with access to information technology. Julie used the award to congratulate all her colleagues at COSMIC for their commitment to the continuing work of overcoming disadvantage and exclusion through support and ICT.

On Social Enterprise Day, 19 November 2009, Julie was invited to 10 Downing Street to a reception with the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, along with others who work in social enterprises around the UK. This was a further recognition of the success which COSMIC has achieved in recent years in using its business model to ensure benefits to people and organisations through ICT and support for other social enterprises.

Photo – Julie (right) with Lucy Findlay CEO of RISE on the steps of No 10

▶ School cuts urged



Schools must cut back on heating, cleaning and equipment bills to save the Government £750million, Schools Secretary Ed Balls has said. He wants headteachers to make the savings through better purchasing decisions and by using technology like smart energy meters.

▶ Government jargon 'is costing people money'

Jargon used by politicians and civil servants is so confusing it is causing people to miss out on benefits and services, an influential Commons committee has concluded. Examples of gobbledegook included "step-change", "holistic governance" and "cross-cutting".

▶ The phone box that thinks it's a library

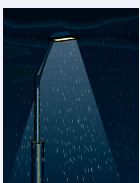


A village in Somerset faced with losing its beloved red phone box and mobile library came up with a clever plan to tackle both difficulties - why not buy the phone box and use it to set up a mini-library? The Parish council in Westbury-sub-Mendip said it had "really taken off".

▶ Schools face huge rise in special-needs cases

The rising number of babies born prematurely will cause a rapid increase in special-needs pupils in schools, and that could overwhelm the education system, according to Professor Barry Carpenter of the Specialist Schools and Academic Trust.

▶ Dim or turn off the street lights



Light pollution not only blocks out the night sky but encourages crime and damages the environment, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution has claimed.

▶ Police reforms fail to increase time on beat

The Government's policing reforms are failing to make significant progress and officers are spending no more time on the streets than two years ago, the Guardian reports.

▶ Drivers to look out for themselves in London's first 'naked' high street

A 380 metre stretch of Camden High Street is to become London's first 'naked' street. Railings, bollards, bins, street signs and even road markings are being removed by Camden Council as part of a scheme to make drivers think more carefully as they use the road. A similar strategy is being adopted in Ashford, Kent.

▶ Officers warn of gold scam



According to the Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Service, unscrupulous firms are offering to buy jewellery at rock-bottom prices. Consumers have been warned about cash-for-gold postal services which may undervalue the current high price of the precious metal.

▶ £500 reward for neighbours who inform on housing frauds

The Government is to offer cash rewards of up to £500 to people who report neighbours they suspect are unlawfully subletting their council home. Ministers have been told that between 50,000 and 200,000 social rented homes in England are occupied by unauthorised tenants, at a time when waiting lists are full and housing projects have stalled.

▶ Newspaper group starts online charging

Britain's most prolific newspaper publisher - Johnston Press - has begun charging for some of its online content, in a closely watched move that could be copied across the country.

▶ Eco-towns will be two-thirds smaller

Plans to set up new eco-towns with 15,000 homes each have been abandoned after the Government was forced to water down its plans. John Healey, the Housing Minister, announced a further 14 locations for the developments but they will not be the ambitious self-standing towns envisaged.

▶ Action on disability hate crimes

Local authorities that fail to protect disabled people from persistent harassment or anti-social behaviour will face legal action if they are found to be ignoring disability hate crimes, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has announced.

▶ Mandelson to make Post Office the People's Bank

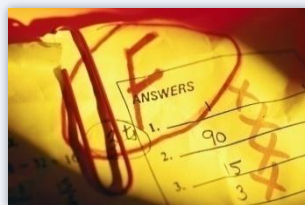
Post offices are to be turned into 'mini banks' offering new kinds of accounts, under plans announced by Lord Mandelson. Children will be able to open savings accounts at their local branch and post offices will offer new types of current and business bank accounts. The Business Secretary said he wanted the post office network to capitalise on its scale - there are more post offices than all other high street bank branches put together.

▶ Radical change could save libraries



Libraries risk sleepwalking through the century unless radical ideas are implemented, claimed Arts Minister Margaret Hodge. A document containing 30 essays has been published to stimulate debate, but Shadow Arts Minister Ed Vaizey condemned it as "not even a consultation. It is a series of essays including an advert from Starbucks."

▶ Extra billions fail to raise school standards



Billions of pounds channelled into schools have failed to produce a corresponding improvement in standards, the

Government's statistics agency has said. Spending on education rose, at current prices, from £29 billion in 1996 to £63.9 billion last year. League tables also reveal growing numbers of primaries failing to teach the basics of literacy and maths.

▶ Unfair demands



Migrant workers are increasingly being relied on to care for Britain's older people. Evidence from an Oxfam report suggests some agencies are

seriously exploiting staff.

Production information

Democratic Services produces this weekly information sheet every Friday for Members of East Devon District Council. Please contact Diana Vernon if you have any comments about the newsletter. **If you wish to reproduce any of the images used in The Knowledge, please contact the editor who will seek permission from the contributor:** ☎ (01395) 517541 or Extension 2741. Email: dvernon@eastdevon.gov.uk

Submissions: If you have items that you wish to be included in the next issue, contact Democratic Services: ☎ (01395) 517542 or Extension 2742. Email: knowledge@eastdevon.gov.uk