

# The Knowledge



Otter Valley at Dawn  
Photo: Ben Chesters

27 June 2008

## Beat Retreat Spectacular



The spectacular Beat Retreat ceremony by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines will be performed in Exmouth on the evening of **Monday, June 30.**

From the 16th Century onwards, the Beat Retreat ceremony has had a fascinating history. It originated in the logistics of early warfare when a drum, then used for all signals on the battlefield, sounded the signal for retreat to warn outlying troops to withdraw to the confines of the encampment before the picquets (or lookouts) were set for the night.

The ceremony now represents a dazzling military pageant, as the Band of the Royal Marines from the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone perform in the Estuary Road car park, watched by VIPs and crowds of onlookers of all ages. They will start playing at 8pm.

The event is hosted by the Chairman of East Devon District Council, Councillor Paul Diviani, and also present will be a selection of civic leaders, officers from Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) and senior officers from Police, Ambulance, Fire, Coastguard and Lifeboat services. Also attending will be local councillors, corporate directors and representatives of armed services' associations such as the Royal British Legion, Royal Air Forces Association and Burma Star.

Admission is free. There is to be a collection in aid of ELF, Exeter Leukaemia Fund. ELF supports the work of the Haematology Centre at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. The charity is celebrating its 20th anniversary during 2008.

Reproduced courtesy of Archant SouthWest

[www.exmouthjournal.co.uk](http://www.exmouthjournal.co.uk)

## This week in The Knowledge

- How to find out more about funding
- Free swimming?
- Meetings
- New documents in the Members' Area
- Executive Board decisions
- Rural Services Network (RSN)
- Looking out for bats in East Devon
- News from the IDEa
- Tenants get more involvement through annual conference
- Quest for suitable house-building sites in East Devon
- Portfolio Holder decision
- In the press



Council Offices  
Knowle  
Sidmouth  
Devon  
EX10 8HL

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)

## Free swimming?

### Red nose day programme 2005 - 2008



1. Comic Relief has grants of over £5,000 for community and voluntary groups for projects relating to; older people; young people; mental health; refugees and asylum seekers; domestic violence; and disadvantaged

communities. Funding is available for between one and three years. The application deadline for the main grants programme is the 15th August 2008.

2. Comic Relief also has grants available of less than £5,000 for projects relating to older people; mental health; and disadvantaged communities through its small grants programme. The small grants programme is only open to organisations with a yearly turnover of less than £150,000 per year. Applications to the small grants programme can be made at any time.

For more information about either programme: [www.comicrelief.com](http://www.comicrelief.com)

### Better school play areas



The Playground Partnerships Initiative 2008 has grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to fund specific

improvements and developments to schools play areas. All schools that are shortlisted will receive at least £250. Schools wishing to apply will first of all need to order the free Playground Partnerships resource pack. Applicants are encouraged to develop a pupil-led approach; involve the whole school; encourage input from the wider school community and include pupils with special educational needs. The submission deadline is 18th July 2008. For more information:

[www.playgroundpartnerships.org](http://www.playgroundpartnerships.org)

### Young peoples media projects



Mediabox have grants of between £1,000 and £40,000 for helping young people develop and produce youth-led media projects. Applications are welcome from legally constituted organisations (such as

limited companies, local authorities, educational institutions, co-operatives) and unincorporated associations (for example charities, clubs and societies with a constitution and a bank account). One to one application sessions will be run throughout July, and the deadline for stage one applications is 19th August. For more information: [www.media-box.co.uk](http://www.media-box.co.uk)

### Make your community healthier



The Department of Health has announced that every town in England has the opportunity to bid for up to £5 million of funding to make their inhabitants more healthy and active. As part of a £30 million Healthy Communities Challenge Fund, Local Authorities in partnership

with Primary Care Trusts will be invited to submit joint applications for innovative and new ways to improve the health of their inhabitants. Ideas could include; increasing the number of cycle lanes; walking promotion schemes; and providing local healthy food initiatives. In each case the local areas will be expected to match any resources they receive from Government. Outline proposals should be submitted by the 11 July 2008. For more information:

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Jamie Buckley (Engagement and Funding Officer)

Tel: 01395 517569 (or Ext 2769) Email: [jbuckley@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:jbuckley@eastdevon.gov.uk)



You may have heard press reports suggesting that everyone over 60 and under 16 could be offered free swimming by 2012. We have received some further detail this week from the Local Government Association (LGA) about what this offer will in fact initially look like.

It is quite clear that the Government's statements about free swimming by 2012 are merely an aspiration at present, there is not yet any commitment beyond the next 2 years, and no entitlement to free swimming is currently being offered.

For the years 2009 to 2011 local government will be offered a grant (on a population formula basis) to introduce free swimming for the over 60's and to promote swimming for under 16's. Bids to a capital fund can also be made for upgrading facilities.

Therefore the Council will need to decide whether to request the grants for either or both the over 60's and under 16s, and consequently commit to offering free swimming to over 60s and incentives for swimming to under 16s.

Evidently there is no way of knowing in advance about the likely level of new uptake of swimming as a result of it becoming free or incentivised, and it is difficult to determine the number of existing swimmers who currently pay but will not have to if free or incentivised swimming is introduced... therefore costs are difficult to ascertain. Equally we do not know whether individual residents will in effect be given a local pass for free swimming, or whether it is free for anyone who meets the age criteria and who swims in our pools (including visitors and tourists)

We have no detail of how the proposed population formula will work at present nor who will administer it, nor how any grant allocation will take in account the different costs of swimming sessions in each authority. There is no comment on how this impacts on special pool sessions (such as aquarobics) nor on swimming lesson costs for 'free' swimmers.

At this stage it seems that the scheme is for local authority pools only, which could have an implication for the business of other swimming providers.

It all seems a bit like the free bus fares scheme again!

The LGA have suggested that their early calculations show the allocated revenue funding could pay somewhere between 75 and 100% of the costs incurred by local authorities. Obviously any shortfall might need to be found from Council resources including Council Tax, unless other agencies were prepared to support the scheme.

We would also need to better understand the likely impact on the capacity of our pools (run via LED of course) to deliver against the possible demand.

As more information becomes available we will prepare a committee paper for decision.



Peter Jeffs – Corporate Director

## Meetings

Meeting	Officer Contact	Date	Time	Location
Licensing & Enforcement Sub Committee	Chris Lane	<del>Monday 30 June</del>	<del>9.30 am</del>	CANCELLED
Asset Management Forum	Chris Lane	Monday 30 June	10.00 am	Committee Room
Local Development Framework Panel	Christopher Holland	Monday 30 June	4.00 pm	Room One
Development Control	Christopher Holland	Tuesday 1 July	2.00 pm	Council Chamber
Licensing & Enforcement Sub Committee	Chris Lane	<del>Monday 7 July</del>	<del>9.30 am</del>	CANCELLED
Scrutiny Committee	Debbie Meakin	Wednesday 9 July	6.30 pm	Council Chamber
Recycling & Refuse Partnership Board	Rachel Perram	<del>Wednesday 9 July</del>	<del>2.00 pm</del>	CANCELLED
East Devon Business Forum	Chris Lane	Tuesday 8 July	6.00 pm	East Devon Business Centre
Planning Inspections Committee	Chris Lane	Friday 11 July	TBC	Council Chamber

Would Councillors please pass their apologies to Democratic Services whenever they are unable to attend a meeting so that post can be sent or withheld as appropriate. **Please check your pigeon holes for any post whenever you visit the offices.**

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).

To view agendas and minutes on the Council's website, click [here](#).

Click [here](#) to view planning applications online.

Click [here](#) to view new applications received relating to the Licensing Act 2003.

Diana Vernon 01395 517541	Christopher Holland 01395 517543	Hannah Jarvis 01395 517542	Chris Lane 01395 517544	Debbie Meakin 01395 517540	Rachel Perram 01395 517542
------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

## New documents in the Members' Area

**The work of the House of Lords 2006-07** – The collective membership of the House of Lords brings significant professional experience and specialist expertise to work it carries out – examples in 2006-07 are outline in the document.

**Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust Open Day 5 July 2008**

**Annual Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life 2007 - 2008**

## Executive Board: 25 June 2008

Members are notified of the following decisions:

	Item	Decision
19	Minutes of the meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board	<p>that the following decisions of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board be noted :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that the Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager visit South Somerset Partnership with Cllr Roger Giles and David Key being invited to attend the visit on behalf of the Scrutiny and Overview Committees. (the visit was made on 11 June 2008).</li> <li>2. that both Cllrs Roger Giles and David Key be invited to attend the Ward Members' briefing day on 27 May 2008, at Knowle, with all Members and Parish Councils in the Phase One area being contacted to stress the importance of the launch event.</li> <li>3. that SITA place an order now for 5-6,000 green recycling boxes.</li> <li>4. that the Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager submit a further report to the Board on Micro Recycling sites (an option for flats) by the end of July 2008.</li> <li>5. that the Chairman arrange a meeting with the Head of ICT to discuss options for mobile working by the Waste Management Officers.</li> <li>6. that SITA be requested to provide a record of bins delivered and with the paperwork to include details of the recipients' addresses and signed by the SITA crew member responsible for the delivery.</li> </ol>
20	University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director (Karime Hassan) in consultation with the Leader of the Council to amend the references in the University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Planning Document to access to the site, following discussions with the Highways Agency and Devon County Council,</li> <li>2. that the amended University of Exeter Science Park Supplementary Document then be adopted to form part of the Council's Local Development Framework.</li> </ol>
21	Report of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs – Draft Management Plans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs draft Management Plans be approved.</li> <li>2. that changes to fill any gaps in detail in the draft Plans be made prior to the commencement of public consultation, with delegated authority being given to Officers and/or Chairman of the AONB Partnerships to make these changes on behalf of the District Council.</li> </ol>
22	Report of the Tender for a preferred supplier re recruitment consultancies	<p>that the appointment of a project board be progressed in order to complete a tender process to procure Recruitment Agencies for the supply of temporary, permanent and fixed term staff.</p>
23	Report of a request for exemption to standing orders	<p>that the exemption to standing orders be agreed to enable the East Devon AONB Partnership to accept a quote from Exeter University to carry out a 3D laser mapping exercise of Beer Quarry Caves for £6,500 without going out to formal tender due to the specialist nature of the work involved.</p>

## Executive Board: 25 June 2008 (continued)

	Item	Decision
25	Report of the Cranbrook S106 Agreement – Land Transfer Arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Community Care Campus – that the freehold interest in the land be transferred to East Devon District Council with an agreement in principle to lease the relevant parts to the appropriate body.</li><li>2. Multi Purpose Building<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) that the freehold interest of the land and building be transferred to EDDC</li><li>(ii) that during the occupation of the building as a school by Devon County Council, the terms of occupation be as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.</li></ol></li><li>3. Town Council Offices &amp; Library – that the freehold interest in the land and building be transferred to EDDC (for forward subsequent transfer to the successor town council) with a lease arrangement with DCC for the library portion of the building, but at a commercial rate and not a peppercorn rate.</li><li>4. Youth Centre land – that the freehold interest of the land to be transferred to EDDC with an agreement to enter a lease arrangement when DCC is in a position to procure a Youth Centre Building.</li></ol>

**The above decisions will become effective on 3 July 2008 at 9.00am unless “called in”. The published procedure for a “call in” is on pages 133-135 of the Council Constitution (as amended at the Annual Meeting of the Council), 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”.**

## Rural Services Network (RSN)

Here are the latest news items from the [Rural Services Network](#):



### Call to increase rural healthcare funding

Rural communities need a greater proportion of healthcare funding, the Government has been told.

[www.rsnonline.org.uk](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk)



### Landowners 'will sell' for affordable homes

Nearly 40% of rural landowners would sell land at below market value for affordable housing, says a study. [www.rsnonline.org.uk](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk)

### Credit crunch threat to affordable homes

THE housing downturn is threatening Government plans to increase the number of affordable rural homes. [www.rsnonline.org.uk](http://www.rsnonline.org.uk)

Note: Members of the Rural Services Network (which includes Councillors and Council staff) can gain free and full access to RSN Online by registering at <http://tinyurl.com/2y7ssp>

## Looking out for bats in East Devon

Magnificent Greater Horseshoebat in Flight



The East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been awarded £61,000 grant money from the SITA Trust for a three year initiative, 'Looking out for bats', to survey rare Greater Horseshoe bats and enhance roost areas in this special area.

Mike Ellingham, the AONB Chairman and National Farmers' Union (NFU) representative, said "This initiative will allow the AONB to work closely with landowners to find out exactly where these rare Greater Horseshoe bats live and feed. We will offer financial help with hedgerow and habitat enhancements close to these roosts, which are also an important feature of our protected landscape. This approach benefits the bats and our farmers, by rewarding them for their careful stewardship".

**What's so special?** Bats are a very rare species which need looking after. There are seventeen species found in the UK, seven of which hibernate at Beer Quarry caves, East Devon, and one of these is the Greater Horseshoe Bat. Greater Horseshoe bats at the caves are safely protected 'behind bars' whilst hibernating in the winter months but when they leave in the spring little is known about where they go to feed or have their young. Greater Horseshoe bats are known to roost in large roof spaces such as old barns and older houses.

**What next?** 'Looking Out for bats' is a three year initiative which aims to;

- find out more about the resident bats in the East Devon AONB;
- work with landowners to improve their bat habitats and roosts;
- encourage people to learn more about bats in their neighbourhood.

The project will run a series of walks, talks and even mountain bike rides about bats, as well as visit local schools to help students find out more about the bats that might be found around their schools.

They will also be recruiting volunteers – our very own 'bat men' and 'bat women'- to help detect Greater Horseshoe bats whilst they are flying beside hedgerows and woodland edges and then tracking them to their roosts. Pete Youngman, AONB Project Officer, said "With bats being nocturnal it is very difficult to trace their movements. It is not like watching birds with binoculars. We have to rely on picking up their echolocation clicks as they fly beside hedgerows and woodland edges so we will be providing training and special bat detectors to volunteers so they can help us with this survey".

**How did this happen?** 'Looking out for bats' was developed by the East Devon AONB Partnership. "This project builds on a pilot bat tracking project which culminated in a successful bat talk to farmers last October in Beer Quarry Caves" added Pete Youngman. "Interest in taking this work forward was resounding and we are pleased to announce we have been successful attracting significant new funding to our AONB".

Funding of £61,000 has been provided by the SITA Trust, with additional contributions from the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund, East Devon District Council, Devon County Council, Axe Vale and District Conservation Society and finally the Sid Vale Association.

If you would like to get involved with the project or find out more, then contact Pete Youngman at the AONB Office 01404 46663 or email [pyoungman@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:pyoungman@eastdevon.gov.uk).

[www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk](http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk)

Picture: (©) osf.co.uk. All rights reserved

## News from the IDeA (Improvement and Development Agency)

### Local involvement leads to happier communities



A new report from the Local Wellbeing Project shows how neighbourhood and

community empowerment can improve wellbeing. Find out how empowerment helps residents take control of their environment and build closer relationships with their neighbours. [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

### Participatory budgeting report

A new report looks at how participatory budgeting can contribute to local democracy by supporting community engagement. It examines how far councils enable people to join in and make budget decisions, and the challenges of developing participatory budget schemes. [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)



### From rust-belt to eco-city: lessons from Sweden

In the early 1990s the bottom dropped out of Malmö's economy. A decade later, it is lauded as one of the most farsighted cities in Europe for sustainable development. How can the UK learn from its transformation? [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

### Neighbourhood working: a mixed approach

Newcastle City Council has developed an 'organic' approach to neighbourhood working. Steps include a ward-based governance model including ward committees, a localised approach to environmental services, and ward planning and neighbourhood management. [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

### Plain English – the pros and cons



Is plain English clear and effective communication? Or merely the over-simplification of important concepts, designed to cater for those with short attention spans?

Read the arguments for and against, as a council communications manager battles it out with an IDeA national adviser.

[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

## Tenants get more involvement through annual conference



True to its promise to give tenants and leaseholders greater involvement in the service offered by EDDC, the Council is hosting a housing conference on: **Wednesday 2 July from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm** – and everyone is invited!

The East Devon Tenant and Leaseholder Customer Panel is holding its Annual Conference at the Council's offices, Knowle, Sidmouth, and the topics covered will be interesting and varied.

Speakers will include Andy Stiles, Metering and Conservation Services Manager at South West Water, and John Golding, EDDC's Head of Housing and Social Inclusion, who will speak about the Audit Commission and what the future holds for EDDC tenants.

EDDC has learned a great deal from last year's inspection of its housing service by the Commission and that learning is feeding into a number of improvements that should enhance the relationship between the Council and its tenants and leaseholders.

There will be a choice of workshops and delegates will be able to choose to attend two from the following: Use of Community Centres with Amy Gilbert, Assistant Home Safeguard Manager; Community Policing with Sergeant Nick Southern from Exmouth Police station; Stock Options – Council v Housing Association with Jenny Vernon, an experienced housing trainer and consultant; and Tenant Involvement in the Housing Service with Andy Ames, who has many years of experience as a tenant involvement officer.

The day is free to all EDDC tenants and leaseholders and refreshments and lunch will be provided. Anyone interested in attending the event should contact the Tenant Participation team on 01395 517453 or e-mail [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk)

## Quest for suitable house–building sites in East Devon



Owners, developers, and other interested people who have land that could provide at least five new homes are being invited to contact East Devon District Council by the end of July. This is so that sites that are potentially suitable for housing are considered as part of the new Local Development Framework for East Devon.

Interested parties will need to provide a map of the land concerned and complete a form to provide basic information about the site, such as current use, constraints and when it would be available for housing.

### Which sites could be suitable?

Before submitting suggestions, it is important for people to be aware that sites which are remote from established settlements, or would affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest or an Ancient Monument, are likely to be discounted early in the process. The Council will examine in more detail sites within or next to the towns of Axminster, Budleigh Salterton, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery St. Mary, Seaton and Sidmouth and smaller towns and villages.

A form setting out the information required may be found on the Council’s website at [www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk). The form can be requested from the forward planning team, on 01395 571543, who can also advise if anyone is unsure about the suitability of a site.

Councillor Ray Franklin, East Devon District Council Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Regeneration said: “This call for sites is intended to ensure that no potentially suitable housing site is overlooked. We need to identify sites to help us prepare plans to meet East Devon’s housing needs over the next 20 years. So, if you have information on whether a suitable site may be available for housing, please send us the details on the appropriate forms”.



Although anyone may submit details of potential sites, owners of sites or those acting on their behalf will have greater credibility when assessing if a site is available for development.

## Portfolio Holders decision

**Decision by Portfolio Holder** Members are notified of the following decision

**Communities**  
(Miss J Elson)

**Request that a sum not exceeding £16,000 be made available from the Housing Revenue Account, in order to fund the development of housing land adjacent to 1 Council houses, Rockbeare**

That a sum not exceeding £16,000 be made available from the Housing Revenue Account, to be used to pay costs associated with the Section 106 agreement restrictive covenants and legal costs, in order to proceed with the construction of 3 houses adjacent to No 1 Council Houses, Rockbeare.

**The above decision will become effective on 3 July 2008 at 9.00 am 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.**

### School Meals Warning



School meal services are on the brink of collapse, providers have warned. The Local Authority Caterers Association (LACA) joined food and health advisory groups to issue the warning in a letter to Education Secretary Ed

Balls. [Mail](#)

Also reported in the Telegraph the LACA says that thousands of schools may be forced to close their canteens because of rising food prices and a sharp fall in the numbers of children choosing Jamie Oliver inspired health school meals. Ministers have been accused of failing to pay for meals as children vote with their feet. [Telegraph](#)

### Public sector workers threaten to strike

Britain was last night facing a summer of discontent after council workers voted to strike. The strike action could see rubbish collections cancelled, schools closed and benefit offices shut. Brian Baldwin from the Employers side of the NJC is quoted as saying: 'Any strike action could have serious implications for some of the most vulnerable people.' [Mail](#)

### Wind turbines get go-ahead



Thousands of wind turbines would be built in some of Britain's best loved countryside under Government plans to be unveiled this

week. Ministers want a six-fold rise in the amount of electricity generated by onshore wind farms by 2020 to meet European targets on green energy. That would mean an extra 4,000 wind turbines across the UK - the equivalent of a new one every day for 12 years. [Daily Mail](#) 23/06

### Rising cost of fuel hits frontline services



Frontline emergency services are being cut to cover the soaring cost of fuel. Rising prices have already driven one police force to reduce recruitment, and there were warnings that the problem will escalate across Britain in the coming weeks. [Sun](#)

### Councils come under fire on parking



Councils have been accused of using parking fines as a 'cash cow' after it emerged that parking charges had risen by a third in just five years. A spokesman from the LGA is quoted: "It is in everyone's interest to make our town and cities clear, uncluttered and safe for pedestrians. All money raised through parking fines goes back into improving the roads." [Sunday Express](#) 22/06

### Welfare delivery opened up

Work and pensions secretary James Purnell has announced that he is opening up Britain's entire welfare system to offers from the private and voluntary sectors, in a far-reaching drive to shrink the role of the state and improve service delivery. The move opens up a potential multi-billion pound market for private companies and voluntary groups, which could bid to run everything from welfare-to-work schemes to projects to rehabilitate former prisoners. [Financial Times](#)

### Cash for problem parents to feed kids properly



Problem parents will be given a £200 'reward' for feeding their children properly, keeping them vaccinated and teaching them to read. One-off cash payments will be made to poor families who abide by new 'contracts out of poverty' to make receiving their £200 dependent on improving their children's lives such as by giving them a healthy diet. [Mail](#)

### Junk jargon, councils told

A banned word list has been published by the LGA which details around 100 words of jargon which councils should not use in a bid to improve how town halls communicate with the public. Sir Simon Milton, Chairman of the



LGA, said: "The public sector must not and should not hide behind impenetrable jargon and phrases". Tunbridge Wells Council has been criticised for replacing the term 'brainstorm' with 'think shower' for fear of offending epileptic people. [Guardian](#)

### Britain has not learnt from floods, says review

Britain is unprepared for a repeat of last summer's devastating floods, a damning report shows. Calling for an overhaul of emergency planning, the report's author Sir Michael Pitt said a Cabinet Committee dedicated to tackling the risk of flooding should be set up, just as there are bodies preparing for terrorist attacks and disease epidemics. The report also called for changes to building regulations so homes are better protected. [Telegraph](#)

### Cowboy builders rip-off flood victims

Cowboy builders are doing "shoddy jobs" and ripping off homeowners in the aftermath of last year's floods, council leaders have warned. The LGA said councils would crack down on rogue traders who took advantage of the shortage of builders after the floods and carried out sub-standard work to damaged houses. [Times](#)

### Protestor halts lamppost removals



A pensioner who went on a hunger strike has halted Bristol City Council's programme to replace Victorian lampposts in parts of the city. [Telegraph](#)

### Scandal of why councils won't fix paving slabs



Councils are sitting on millions of pounds in case they are sued by people falling on uneven pavements - instead of just repairing the broken slabs. The situation has been brought about by no-win, no-fee lawyers and mean that every day as many 2,300 pensioners suffer a fall on our streets. [Telegraph](#)

### Think big – planning decisions must be fast, but fair

The planning process need not remain snail-like, but politicians must be able to put the brakes on projects in the public interest. Outsourcing controversial decisions to a quango is likely to provoke legal challenges and put 'grand projects' even further out of reach: a good result for no one. [Times](#)

### Fast-track for new nuclear plants as PM wins planning vote

Gordon Brown crushed a rebellion over changes to planning laws paving the way for nuclear power stations and wind farms across Britain. The changes allow for an infrastructure planning commission, which can give approval for projects such as nuclear plants and airports in months, compared with the years currently taken. [Mail](#)

### Children 'are ignorant of nature'



Shadow environment secretary Greg Barker will today warn that health and safety 'mania' in schools has left a generation of children with no understanding of the natural world. Field trips and outdoor activities have been all but scrapped, he will say, and a preoccupation with tests and targets means children have less and less chance of being 'liberated from the classroom'. [Mail](#)

## In the press (continued)

### Energy bills set to soar

Energy bosses were blasted by MPs for making excess profits while families were struggling to pay household bills. Customers are already paying an average of £1000 a year for gas and electricity, which could rise by £400 because of the squeeze on resources. [Guardian](#)

### Bristol wins first cycling city title in plan to get Britons pedalling



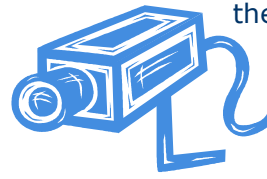
Bristol was named the country's first cycling city as part of a £100m investment by the Government to turn the city and 11 towns into centres of urban cycling. [Guardian](#)

### Council tax relief for flood victims

John Healey, the minister in charge of flood recovery efforts, has announced that families still homeless after last year's floods will get financial assistance from the Government to help pay their council tax. [Mirror](#)

### Local Government Association (LGA) to review use of surveillance

Councils in England have been urged to review the way they use surveillance to investigate suspected crime or risk losing public support for investigation which target more serious crime.



LGA chairman Sir Simon Milton has written to all council leaders and is quoted: "Parliament clearly intended that councils should use the new powers, and generally they are being used to respond to residents' complaints about fly tippers, rogue traders and those defrauding the council tax or housing benefit system."

[Telegraph](#)

**Please note that the Express & Echo web site for press coverage is:** [www.thisisexeter.co.uk](http://www.thisisexeter.co.uk)

**For Western Morning News stories the web site is:** [www.thisisdevon.co.uk](http://www.thisisdevon.co.uk)

**For Archant news stories the web site is** [www.devon24.co.uk](http://www.devon24.co.uk)

Please note that links to some websites will only work correctly if you have Adobe PDF Reader Version 7 or 8 on your computer. You can download this free from the Adobe website:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readmain.html>

If you require further assistance please contact Democratic Services on 01395 517546.

### Production Information:

The Democratic Services team 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.** Telephone: (01395) 517541 or Extension: 2741 . Email: [dvernon@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:dvernon@eastdevon.gov.uk)