

The Knowledge



Harbour at Seaton
Photo: Debbie Fletcher

This week in The Knowledge

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- In the press

22 February 2008

Out and about

Now that the weather is starting to improve, why not take advantage of some of these local events:

Otter Valley weekend discovery walk

23 February, 10am-12.30pm

Join the Otter Valley Association on this moderate 5 ½ mile walk taking in the coast path and old railway track. Wear suitable clothing. Meet at Kersbrook, under railway bridge: [SY069830](http://www.ova.org.uk/). New members welcome. <http://www.ova.org.uk/>



Photo: Ray Steer Kemp

Undercliffs National Nature Reserve work party – 23 February, 10am - 4pm

Join Axe Vale and District Conservation Society volunteers for this conservation work party. Part of ongoing programme to control non-native plants on this National Nature Reserve - clearing/burning invasive Cherry Laurel. Bring packed lunch and suitable clothing if staying for whole day. Meet at Whitlands - [SY305912](http://www.axevaleconservation.co.uk). New members welcome. www.axevaleconservation.co.uk

Meet the birds - Colyford Common Local Nature Reserve, 29 February, 9am – 12noon

Join Education Ranger James Chubb on his monthly look at the birds of the Axe Estuary. Just drop in. Colyford Common: [SY249923](http://www.axevaleconservation.co.uk)

**East
Devon**
District Council

Council Offices
Knowle
Sidmouth
Devon
EX10 8HL

www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Nationwide free bus travel



On 1 April this year a nationwide free bus travel scheme is being introduced. This will mean that, whether using the bus locally, or when visiting other parts of the country, older and eligible disabled people will be able to travel for free on any off-peak local bus anywhere in England. This is an extension to the scheme, started in April 2006, which allowed free off-peak travel to eligible users in their local area only. Existing bus pass holders need do nothing - they will automatically be sent a new pass covering them for the extended scheme



For East Devon residents who are aged 60 or over, or eligible disabled, this means that they will be able to visit friends, go shopping and enjoy a day out outside of the district, using the local bus network. The concession won't allow them to use national coaches, but it will give them the freedom to travel further afield on the local buses.

Leaflets and bus pass application forms will be available in Tourist Information Centres throughout the district. There is more information on the Council's [website](#) and a dedicated email address has been set up to receive queries: buspass@eastdevon.gov.uk. Residents can also call 01395 571500.

Funding

The B&Q One Planet Living Awards

Is there an environmental group, community organisation, school, charity or sports club in your area that could be transformed with an award of between £1,000 and £10,000 of B&Q products? The One Planet Living Awards will help regenerate local areas and will support environment/energy saving, natural habitats/wildlife and local culture/heritage projects. In addition, B&Q is offering 2 awards of £5,000 combined cash/product to schools who submit innovative science-based proposals, showing a real understanding of the environment and the importance of tackling climate change. Apply by Friday 28 March 2008 by downloading the [application form](#) or by calling the 24 hour application hotline on 0845 300 1001.



New documents in the Members' Area

- **In the know – Using information to make better decisions:** The Audit Commission has published a discussion paper designed to stimulate public bodies to think about how they use information. The core argument is that using information well in decision-making leads to better local public services.

The paper, which is now available in the Members' Area, includes a checklist for those who manage public services to help improve the use of information. You can also access this publication online: [In the know](#)





PUBLIC OPINION:
We need ideas,
says Jonathan
Kestenbaum



TAYLOR REVIEW:
Ensure your
views are heard
on rural
affordable homes



POST OFFICES:
Special report on
the future of the
rural network

Wednesday 20 February 2008

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Events

The Rural Services Network (RSN) now has a new website: www.rsonline.org.uk

RSN Online acts as a rural consultant at your fingertips, combining dedicated rural news, analysis and briefings with an online forum and web-based document store. Here are the latest news items (click the headings to view the article):

MPs hit out at Post Office closures

A lack of clarity is making it almost impossible for rural residents to prevent Post Office closures, warn MPs.

Text messages to catch rural criminals

Police in Lancashire introduce an innovative text messaging scheme in a bid to catch rural criminals.

Rural pensioners braced for winter chill

Soaring fuel prices are leaving thousands of rural pensioners to face massive winter heating bills, say campaigners.

Consultation: The Taylor Review

Help formulate the network's response to the Matthew Taylor Review on rural economy and rural housing.

Special report: What next for post offices?

An examination of the implications of the Post Office's Network Change Programme, involving the closure of 2,500 Post Office branches.

Appeal for evidence on rural housing

Stakeholders are urged to respond to a government inquiry into the state of affordable rural housing.

Broadband internet is unreliable, say firms

Rural broadband internet connections are increasingly unreliable at a time when they are needed most, say business leaders.

Defra in £1 billion budget crisis

Rural business leaders call for urgent talks with Defra secretary Hilary Benn to discuss a cash crisis looming in the countryside.

Study probes 'postmodern' countryside

People are more likely to regard the countryside as a place for leisure than somewhere their food is produced, say academics.

Special report: A future for rural schools?

Analysis of the political furore following claims that the government had reneged on a decade-old promise to keep rural schools open.

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>

Forthcoming meetings

Meeting	Officer Contact	Date	Time	Location
Licensing & Enforcement Sub Committee	Chris Lane	Monday 25 February	9.30am	CANCELLED
Beach concessions Task and Finish Forum	Chris Lane	Monday 25 February	6.30pm	Committee Room
Media training for Councillors	Diana Vernon	Tuesday 26 February	5.45pm for 6pm start	Council Chamber
Manor Pavilion Management Steering Committee	Christopher Holland	Tuesday 26 February	6.00pm	Committee Room
Noise Sub Group	Chris Lane	Wednesday 27 February	2.00pm	POSTPONED
Executive Board	Diana Vernon	Wednesday 27 February	5.30pm	Council Chamber
Licensing and Enforcement Committee	Chris Lane	Monday 3 March	9.30am	Council Chamber
Licensing & Enforcement Sub Committee	Chris Lane	Monday 3 March	9.30am	Council Chamber
Exeter Airport Consultative Group	Chris Lane	Wednesday 5 March	2.15pm	Exeter Airport
Scrutiny Committee	Debbie Meakin	Wednesday 5 March	6.30pm	Council Chamber
East Devon Business Forum - Special	Chris Lane	Thursday 6 March	6.00pm	East Devon Business Centre
Housing Review Board	Rachel Perram	Thursday 6 March	6.30pm	Committee Room

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.

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, reports and minutes on the Council's website, choose Quick Links (Committee Papers) on the front page of the website.

To view planning applications online, choose Planning on Quick Links, then click the Planning Online logo.

Diana Vernon 01395 517541	Christopher Holland 01395 517543	Chris Lane 01395 517544	Debbie Meakin 01395 517540	Rachel Perram 01395 517542
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Licensing Act 2003

http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/applications_received

Access to new applications received relating to the Licensing Act 2003. On this page you can download information on licensing applications which have been received by the Licensing Authority and are currently within the 28 day period for receipt of representations / objections.

Contracts

Upgrade to the electrical services at 59 Council properties in Sidmouth, East Budleigh, Axmouth, Payhembury, Newton Poppleford, Woodbury, Seaton, Brampford Speke, Honiton and Uplyme

The Council accepted the lowest tender received from MAT Electrics of Exeter, in the sum of £25,239.57 excluding VAT dated 29 January 2008.

Upgrade to windows at 9 Council properties at Higher Brook Meadow - Sidford

The Council accepted the lowest tender received from Aspects Windows Ltd of Exeter, in the sum of £26,030.00 excluding VAT dated 7 February 2008.

Chris Brookbank (Programmed Works Officer - Housing Services Team)
Tel: 01395 516551 Ext 2408 Email: cbrookbank@eastdevon.gov.uk

News from the IDEa (Improvement and Development Agency)

North East Lincs and the 2007 floods



A heavy band of rain fell across northeast Lincolnshire overnight on Sunday 24 June. The following day, the council was waking up to a quagmire and severe disruption involving 600 homes. Find out how it met the challenge. www.idea.gov.uk

Adults' services: 'must knows' for lead members

This new resource is being developed to help lead members for adults' services in their complex role. It contains a set of 18 'must know' questions on key topics, and a wealth of supporting information. Read about the issues, and discuss them in our special councillor forum. www.idea.gov.uk

Grouping together to tackle worklessness

Discover how the Lancashire Partnership used its local area agreement to tackle worklessness and reduce the number of people claiming incapacity benefit. www.idea.gov.uk

All aboard the cooking bus



Getting children to eat a nutritious, balanced diet can often be a struggle. Discover how the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Focus on Food charity are working together to educate young people on healthy eating by using a cooking bus.

www.idea.gov.uk

In the press

Supermarkets to face tougher planning laws

A 'competition test' will be introduced where local councils will have to take into account how many outlets of a supermarket are already in a particular area. Supermarkets could also face big fines and public shaming if they use their size to bully suppliers, the Competition Commission has announced. [Times](http://www.times.co.uk)

Regulators back supermarkets



The Competition Commission has told supermarkets they do not have to sell off their stockpiled land but they will have to pass a 'competition test' to be considered by local authorities when granting permission for a new store.

[Independent](http://www.independent.co.uk)

Council pays £60,000 to move newts



A council is to challenge legislation after spending £60,000 to move four newts a short distance from the path of a construction site. Cheshire County

Council is unhappy with both European and domestic legislation which requires developers to find newts a new home and follow a complex set of procedures. [Times](#)

UK at bottom of renewable list

Britain is the third worst performer in the EU in its use of renewable energy and produces just 2% of energy from renewables. [Guardian](#)

UK over-populated



A study published by the Optimum Population Trust will say that the UK is over-populated and that every person should reduce their carbon footprint by over 70%.

[Telegraph](#)

Whitehall blunder gives the wrong Newcastle £2.8m!

The Government has admitted giving the wrong council £2m of LABGI (Local Authority Business Growth Incentive) money by mistake, and is now trying to get it back. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) gave Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council the cash, when it reportedly should have gone to Newcastle City Council instead! The Executive Director for Resources at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council said it had received the money 'in good faith' and had already spent or committed to spend the cash on regenerating the town centre. [Daily Mail](#) [Guardian](#)

Ministers urge more 'alcohol zones'

Hundreds more designated 'alcohol zones' should be introduced to help combat anti-social behaviour on British streets, a Home Office Minister said yesterday. Vernon Coaker called on councils to make greater use of existing powers to ban the drinking of alcohol in public. [Times](#)

Council catches out benefits cheats using lie detector

Lie detector tests used by Harrow Council that analyse voice changes in telephone conversations have slashed £336,000 off benefit bills. Early results show that of the 998 people assessed using the technology 12 per cent were identified as 'high risk'. 43 of these 119 were found to have been incorrectly paid benefit. [Times](#)

Houses bar-coded

The Government has bar-coded every house in the country in preparation for the revaluation of homes for council tax. The Conservatives liken the scheme to a modern day 'Domesday Book'. [Telegraph](#)



Underage drinking crackdown

Police are being given alcohol testing strips in a bid to crack down on underage drinking during half term. [Observer](#)

License to smoke



Smokers will be forced to pay for a licence to buy cigarettes under plans to reduce tobacco related deaths. The proposals have been drawn up by Health England and are being considered by Lord Darzi. [Times](#)

Balloons could provide rural broadband

Weather balloons hovering at the outer limits of the Earth's atmosphere could be used to provide mobile phone and broadband services to rural Britain. [Times](#)

"Chainsaw massacre" as councils prune planting budgets



A Government report revealed that trees are being cut down by local councils faster than they are being planted.

Spending cuts on tree maintenance and fear of insurance claims over subsidence or health and safety issues have been blamed. An Local Government Association (LGA) spokesman is quoted: "Trees add character and charm to an area and councils go to great lengths to protect existing trees and plant new ones." [Telegraph](#)

In the press (continued)

Knife crime crackdown

Home secretary Jacqui Smith has announced plans to allow parents to be informed if anyone who has regular unsupervised access to their children poses a risk. The scheme will be tested in Cambridgeshire, Hampshire, Cleveland and Warwickshire. The Government will also tell parents they must allow their children to be searched in school to rid Britain's classrooms of knives. [Observer](#)

Knife scanners in schools

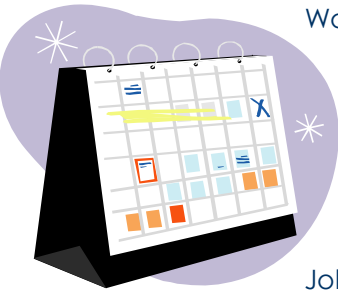


Southampton has become the first city in Britain to equip headmasters in all its schools with metal detector wands to tackle knife crime. [Mail](#)

Council tax protester jailed again

A pensioner who spent three days in prison after he refused to pay his council tax has been jailed again. Richard Fitzmaurice, 76, refused to pay his £1,359 bill to West Norfolk Council because his basic pension had not increased in line with living costs. [Mail](#)

Move to link unemployment to new work scheme



Work and pensions secretary James Purnell has proposed that 250,000 long-term unemployed will have to work or train for a month to keep their Jobseeker's Allowance.

Ministers want to end the "one size fits all" approach to helping the unemployed find jobs. [Telegraph](#)

CCTV evidence can lead to parking fine

Millions of motorists are likely to incur parking fines without realising it after being caught on CCTV. From 31 March, councils across England and Wales will have the power to use remote cameras to enforce parking laws, then send tickets by post. [Telegraph](#)

Airport staff first to get id cards

Thousands of airport workers will become the first British nationals to be issued with new biometric identity cards within the next 2 years in the latest Government attempt to kick start the controversial scheme. The Government and airports are in talks about how ID cards could deliver improved airport security after concluding that the current system of background checks leaves the sector vulnerable to terrorist attack. [Financial Times](#)



Spending on non-NHS care soars

Spending on patient care from outside the NHS has been the fastest-growing component of the health service's expenditure during the past decade and reached £5bn a year in 2006, figures from the Office for National Statistics show. Spending on care bought from the private and voluntary sectors and local authorities has been rising by 15 per cent a year on average since 1995. The proportion of healthcare bought from the private and voluntary sectors and from local authorities has more than doubled since Labour took power in 1997. [Financial Times](#)

Call for bin pilots to be scrapped



Ministers should abandon pilots for waste collection incentive schemes because they are a "messy compromise", according to a report by the Communities and Local Government

Committee. The MPs said all councils should have the powers to introduce incentives if they wanted. Cllr Paul Bettison, Chairman of the LGA Environment Board, is quoted: "There will be parts of the country where financial incentive schemes are not appropriate, and the final decision must be made by local councils." [BBC](#)

Goodbye Glasto?

This year's Glastonbury Festival could be the last, organisers have admitted. [Times](#)

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

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

You can access press items by going onto the secure Members' web page of EDDC's website and clicking on the 'In the Press' link. This is updated every Saturday.

Please note that the Express & Echo web site for press coverage is: www.thissexeter.co.uk

For Western Morning News stories the web site is: www.thisisdevon.co.uk

For Archant news stories the web site is www.devon24.co.uk

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.**

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Submissions: If you have items that you wish to be included in the next issue, please contact Democratic Services.

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