



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE
Environmental Health

Ottery St Mary Neighbourhood Assessment Winter 2007



“There’s a real sense of community in Ottery”
“A friendly town, full of history and tradition”

These were two of the many comments that Environmental Health staff received recently while carrying out a neighbourhood assessment in Ottery St Mary, as part of a joint partnership with Ottery Police. Their aim was to find out what most concerned the people of Ottery about their community, what the residents would like East Devon District Council to do to improve their neighbourhood and whether they liked living in the town.

Around 400 properties were visited in total by Environmental Health staff and Police Community Support Officers over several days. Many people were interviewed and a public open day was held at The Institute in Yonder Street where any resident could call in to express their concerns or complaints.

A large proportion of the residents said how much they enjoyed living in Ottery St Mary and many confirmed they would not change anything about their town. However, there were a number of various concerns and complaints including the following issues.



The main areas of concern were:

Dog Fouling

Numerous people were concerned that dog fouling is still prevalent in Ottery and the worst affected streets reported were Yonder Street, Paternoster Road, Sandhill Street, Saddlers Lane and Ridgeway Gardens. There were also complaint of fouling on the footpaths along the river and in Canaan Park.



The Council's plain clothes Enforcement Officer has been investigating any reported complaints and visiting the worst affected areas. Fixed penalty tickets will be issued to anyone who is witnessed not clearing up after their dogs.



If you would like to make a complaint about dog fouling or to report anyone who allows their dog to foul the area, please phone

01395 517457 to help us to deal with this anti-social problem.

'Caught doing right'

In addition to enforcing legislation, the Council is running a 'Caught Doing Right' campaign. Officers who witness any dog owner clearing up after their dogs will be handed a freepost card which will entitle them to enter a draw offering prizes which include a visit to Crufts or a supply of dog food.



Litter and street cleaning

Discarded litter from the customers of a takeaway in Mill Street was accumulating in doorways and gutters. Environmental Health



staff have spoken to the owner of the takeaway who has agreed to clear around the area each day, and dispose of any packaging and litter before it causes a nuisance. Legislation now imposes a responsibility on the owners of certain businesses to ensure their packaging does not cause a litter nuisance in the area.



There were several other complaints of litter and requests for more frequent street cleaning in and around the town centre. All comments and requests have been passed to the Council's StreetScene department for investigation.

Many residents praised the new Street Cleansing Operative for doing an excellent job keeping the streets swept.



Cigarette butts

A number of complaints were received concerning cigarette butts dropped on the

pavement and in the gutters outside the Lamb and Flag pub.



Since the smoking ban came into force in 2007 this has become a problem with people standing outside to smoke.. The landlord of the Lamb and Flag has agreed to clear the area each day and to install window boxes filled with sand for his customers to use as ash trays around the front of the pub shortly.

Fly tipping

There were also reports of illegal fly tipping in the area. The Council's new REACT team can now deal with both the removal and investigation of fly tipping in the area. If you wish to report any incident of fly tipping in the area please phone **01395 517528**.

Graffiti

A few people said they were concerned about graffiti around the town. Any graffiti reported on Council owned land and buildings is cleared quickly by StreetScene. Investigations will take place and fixed penalty notices issued to anyone found defacing property with graffiti. The cleaning of graffiti on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.

However, graffiti visible from any public space or highway should be reported to StreetScene



Parking and speeding vehicles

The main concern of many residents concerned parking. Complaints ranged from lack of parking space in certain streets to dangerous and illegally parked vehicles on grass verges and double yellow lines. Inconsiderate parking frequently causes obstruction to buses, emergency vehicles, disabled buggies and pedestrians. The Police say they are fully aware of the parking issues within the town and fixed penalty tickets will be issued to persistent offenders instead of advice in the future.



Town Mill

We received a few enquiries about the future plans for the Town Mill which has been closed for several years. East Devon District Council's Planning team currently has no outstanding planning applications for this site. However, any applications received in the future will be advertised on the site and any immediate neighbours will be contacted with the details.



They are also taking positive action to resolve a problem in Jesu Street. However they say it is imperative that local residents assist them by parking in a considerate and lawful manner. Officers can only take action on public roads maintained by the local authority so where problems exist on private roads, residents may need to seek civil legal advice for ongoing problems.

A small number of people complained of speeding traffic around the town at times. The Police records do not show that there is a specific problem with speeding vehicles or 'boy racers' within the town. However they ask for concerned residents to report specific incidents so that they can investigate them further.

Anti-social behaviour

A number of people expressed their concerns about anti-social behaviour particularly in the vicinity of Canaan Park. There were reports of under age drinking, vandalism and banging on windows in Yonder Street.



Ottery Police mounted an operation last summer which involved increased patrols at known hotspots and took positive action in relation to unacceptable behaviour. This resulted in a decline in reported incidents. As these incidents increase as the weather becomes warmer, they will be re-launching this operation in the spring to deter youths from acts of anti-social behaviour. They ask members of the public to report specific incidents so that they have a clear picture of where the problems exist to assist them in dealing positively with specific offenders.

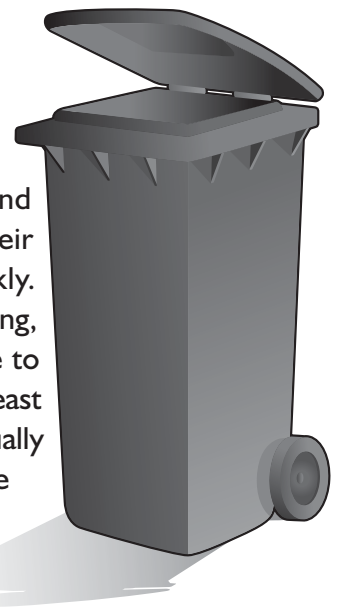
Police Station

Concerns were raised about the opening hours of Ottery Police Station. However, Ottery Police said manning a reception desk would prevent officers from patrolling the streets. Therefore they do not operate a public reception facility there. The procedure for contacting local officers or for requesting more urgent police assistance is to call **08452 777444** or **999** in an emergency. Call handlers can then properly record incidents, crimes and messages and ensure they are passed to the appropriate person.



Recycling

There were a large number of residents across Ottery who expressed a wish to be able to recycle plastics and cardboard and to have their recycling collected weekly. Weekly collections of recycling, including plastic bottles is due to begin later in the year in the east of the district. This will eventually roll out across the rest of the district. It is anticipated that cardboard and other plastics will also be included in the recycling schemes in the future. Many people requested wheeled bins but there were also some concerns about



storage areas in some terraced properties. In certain cases gull-proof sacks may be provided as an alternative to wheeled bins.

RIO

The privately run Recycling in Ottery company was praised by many residents. R.I.O was established in 1994 by a team of volunteers. Its aims are to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by encouraging local people to donate their unwanted household items to RIO, which in turn makes the re-usable items available to local people at low cost.

You can get in touch with RIO by telephoning **01404 815825** or for more information visit www.recyclinginottery.org.uk.



Drainage odour

One resident reported a foul smelling odour emitting from the drain in Saddlers Lane following heavy rain. The complaint has been logged with South West Water who have said they are investigating the possible cause.



Energy Efficiency

A number of people wanted to know how to obtain more information about ways to increase the insulation in their properties. There are grants available for most householders to help towards the cost of loft and cavity wall insulation. With full grants available to certain residents depending on circumstances. Application forms and advice leaflets were forwarded to those who requested them. If you would like more information on grants available and how much you could save, please call The Heat Project on freephone **0800 0934050**.



Many people said how much they enjoyed living in Ottery St Mary.

They said the town had a great sense of community and most people felt they were living in a safe environment where people cared about each other.



If you have a further comments on the neighbourhood assessment please call Debbie Fletcher or Andrew Ennis on **01395 517457** or email dfletcher@eastdevon.gov.uk

www.eastdevon.gov.uk