

Environmental Health Neighbourhood Assessment



'Your environment and your health'

Whimble

Winter 2009/2010



www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Environmental Health carried out a Neighbourhood Assessment in Whimble in January 2010. They worked in partnership with Ottery St Mary Police and together carried out a door-to-door survey in the village, as part of a district-wide initiative to raise awareness about services available to residents. The team also enquired whether residents had any comments about the Council's services they receive and whether they had any concerns or complaints about their neighbourhood.

A representative from The British Red Cross joined the team to promote a life saving course in the village. Residents were also offered a Police home security check and a free fire prevention assessment. An open surgery was held on the same day at The Victory Hall, where Environmental Health staff were available all day to discuss local concerns with residents.



▲ **Officers from Environmental Health, Street Scene, Housing, the British Red Cross, Building Control and Devon and Cornwall Police working together.**

Over the last year the Environmental Health Service has dealt with 44 requests for service in Whimble including:

- 6 pest control complaints including, 3 rat sightings, 1 wasp nest removal and 2 fly nuisance
- 7 consultations on the environmental impact of proposed developments arising from both planning applications and building control applications
- 2 alleged noise nuisance from loud music
- 4 alleged barking dog complaints and 1 stray dog
- 2 food hygiene requests for services and advice
- 6 routine food hygiene inspections
- 3 complaints about frequent smoky bonfires
- 1 house condition complaint
- 1 alleged odour from a poultry incinerator
- 1 alleged noise from animals complaint
- 3 complaints concerning dog fouling in public areas
- 1 consultation with Devon Fire and Rescue regarding a Fire Notice
- 6 letters of advice to dairy farmers
- 1 cattery licence consultation

During the Neighbourhood Assessment day hundreds of properties were visited, and approximately 40 residents were interviewed. 72% of those spoken to said they were satisfied with the services they currently receive from EDDC and the main areas of concern within the village were as follows.

Whimble Railway Station

There were some complaints about the level of noise from platform announcements at Whimble Station. Some nearby residents felt they were unnecessarily loud and asked whether we could help to reduce the sound level. Environmental Health made contact with South West Trains to discuss this issue. Their Information Centre checked the levels and said the noise level was within the limits with no deviation in loudness. However they have now adjusted the volume down and will be visiting the station in the near future to re-assess the situation to ensure it is not still causing a nuisance, but is still within safety limits.

A few residents were worried that the number of trains stopping at Whimble Station may be reduced, or that the station may be closed when the new station is built in Cranbrook.

A spokesman for Network Rail said they were not aware of any plans to close Whimble Station and they confirmed that only The Department of Transport has the power to close a railway station. It was confirmed that a new station is planned at Cranbrook in the first phase of development and South West Trains are project managing the design.

Devon County Council's Deputy Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Culture said "the current timetable has been designed by South West Trains to include a time allowance for stopping at Cranbrook. Hence, when Cranbrook opens, there should be no change at Whimple. Calls at Whimple and Feniton are protected in the Service Level Commitment which governs the operation of the Franchise".



Waste and recycling

A large number of residents raised the waste and recycling collection as their main concern. Many were keen to see the new recycling scheme introduced as soon as possible and hoped that plastics and cardboard would be included.

The new recycling scheme is planned to be introduced to the Whimple area in November 2010. This will include weekly recycling collections, adding plastic bottles and introducing separate food waste collections. New containers will be issued for landfill waste, which will then be collected fortnightly.

As the trucks do not currently have the capacity to take cardboard, this will not be included in the collections at this time. Once the service has been rolled out across the entire district by the end of 2010, further recycling options can be considered, depending on costs. Meanwhile residents are advised to either store up cardboard and take it to the recycling centre when passing, or put cardboard in their landfill bin. Small amounts of cardboard can be home composted. Some residents also praised Otter Rotters for their garden waste collections. For more information visit www.otterrotters.co.uk

StreetScene can be contacted on **01395 517528** for more information and to report any refuse or recycling problems.

Full details of all refuse collection days can be obtained at any time on the Council's website at www.eastdevon.gov.uk/my_neighbourhood.

Police issues

The majority of residents said they felt they lived in a low crime area and experienced a very good quality of life. A small number were slightly worried that crime may increase when Cranbrook is built.

The speed of traffic past the school and in Church Road concerned a number of people. Some asked for the existing speed limit to be more rigorously enforced, and others said they regularly saw motorists driving through the village whilst using mobile phones. The Police said they are fully aware of these issues and will be monitoring this problem further at school times and rush hours. One resident was unhappy that she could not join the walking bus to school as she felt it was too dangerous in her area. The police have now discussed this problem with her and will carry out further patrols around Church Road where there is no pavement.

A few people thought young people were drinking and leaving bottles around in the play park. The Police have conducted patrols in this location at appropriate times, but to date have found no youths at the area, however they will continue to monitor the situation.



There was a request to have access to an email address for the local police. A Police Officer has given his email address to this resident and anyone can now email Ottery Police to report or discuss minor issues and non emergencies at **simon.tennant@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk**.

Dogs

A number of residents raised the problem of dog fouling in the village. The worst affected areas mentioned were, the footpath leading from the school to the station, The Square to The Green and Elizabeth Close Play Park.

All complaints have been passed to the Council's Enforcement Officer, who has visited the village on several occasions in plain clothes and spoken to dog walkers. A new Dog Control Order came into force across East Devon on 1 October 2009. It is now an offence for any person in control of a dog to fail to clear up after it, on all land to which the public have access. The only exception is Forestry Commission land.



Anyone who witnesses dog fouling in a public place is asked to report this to the Enforcement Officer. The dog's owner will be contacted and a Fixed Penalty Notice with a fine of £80 may be issued for a first offence. Further offences or failure to pay the penalty ticket could result in a fine of up to £1000.

Some residents asked for more dog bins to be provided. Additional dog bins can be supplied and emptied three times a week by StreetScene, if formerly requested and paid for by the Parish Council.

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

The British Red Cross

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

During the survey the Red Cross representative asked residents whether they would consider attending a first aid course in the village, and around 26 residents expressed an interest. The course is due to be held in the Spring and may include the new REDiPlan home emergency planning session, which helps people to plan ahead for emergencies.



First aid tip for burns

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

If you are interested in taking part in a life saving course, please call Suzi White on **01823 273712** for further details.



Blocked streams and gutters

We received several reports about blocked streams and gutters causing flooding across roads in the village. Some people thought this could be caused by hedge cuttings which were left to accumulate in the ditches at the side of the roads. We passed these concerns to Devon County Council whose spokesman said that if anyone is aware of who is responsible for any cuttings or waste being left in the gutters, they should contact Richard Hosgood on **0845 155 1004** who will take action to ensure the cuttings are removed to avoid any future flooding problems.



There were also some reports of an overflow pipe in a retaining wall at a cottage in the village. The water was said to drain through the hole in the wall, causing an ice hazard on the highway during freezing temperatures. A StreetScene Officer has now inspected the pipe and is currently dealing with this problem.

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

Building Control

Residents were asked whether they had any concerns regarding buildings or ongoing building work in the area. There were some queries about the stability of a metal fence outside a barn conversion in Station Road. A Building Control Officer visited the site and inspected the fence. The owner of the site consequently agreed to carry out remedial works and this has now resolved the problem.



Fire Safety

During the door to door survey residents were offered a free home safety visit by Devon and Somerset Fire Service, and eleven householders took up this offer. This service is available to anyone who wishes to improve fire safety within their home. A Fire Officer will visit the property to carry out a short assessment, give advice and may be able to supply a battery smoke detector.

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

White line marking

There were reports that the road markings near Whimble Post Office were worn and in need of remarking. We contacted Devon County Council's Highways Management and an Officer inspected the area and confirmed that the give-way markings outside the Post Office were considered a safety defect under Devon County Council's policy, and



were therefore able to be replaced quickly. They were consequently remarked on 9 February 2010. The markings between Dince Hill Close and The Thirsty Farmer Inn roundabout are to be included in their future maintenance scheme as these were not considered to be urgent.

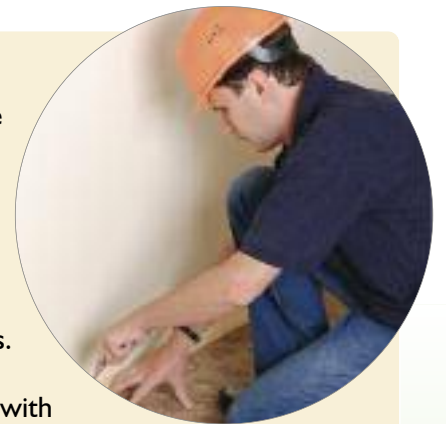
Litter

StreetScene's REACT operatives were in the village carrying out a deep clean during the Neighbourhood Assessment, which included a litter pick in the hedges and road sides. These intense village clean ups are carried out twice yearly in all villages.

Most residents felt the village was clean and litter free although some people were concerned that litter and bottles were occasionally left in the parish field park and around the church yard. There was also a suggestion by some that school children may be responsible for leaving litter in The Square.



Details of the Care and Repair scheme were discussed with residents during the Neighbourhood Assessment. This home improvement agency can offer advice, support and help to the over 60s and people with disabilities. They can make home visits to assess the need for repairs, improvements or adaptations.



Care and Repair also offer a 'handyperson scheme' which provides assistance with an assortment of small repairs around the home, whilst ensuring that work is done professionally and at a reasonable cost. For further details about assistance from Care and Repair please call 01395 514790.

Pests

There were a small number of complaints about rats in the area. Details of EDDC's pest control service have been supplied to any householder who requested a treatment. EDDC offer East Devon residents a pest control service for pests of public health significance. This service is provided on the Council's behalf by Rentokil Initial Plc.

Many types of pest can be treated and the treatment for rats is available for domestic properties at a reduced cost of £23.50 per treatment.

To request a pest control treatment please call **0845 6010 211** or to discuss any pest problems in your area please call Environmental Health on **01395 517457**.



Photo © Reg Mckenna

Planning issues

Some residents said they failed to see planning notices erected for new planning applications around the village, and wished more notices were displayed. All the planning concerns and comments received were forwarded to EDDC's planning section for their information. For enquiries and further information on Planning please visit the EDDC website at

www.eastdevon.gov.uk or
call **01395 571595**.



Energy efficiency

Residents were offered information and advice relating to the grants available for energy efficiency measures and sixteen residents requested further details and application forms. The Cosy Devon scheme offers free or greatly discounted loft and cavity wall insulation to all homeowners and private tenants.

If you would like more information or a free, no obligation survey, please call **0800 512 012** to speak to an advisor at Energy Action Devon.

**Would you like
to know more?**

For more information
call Warm Zones free on

0800 512 012

or visit the website at

www.devonwarmzones.org.uk.

DEVON
warmzones



*I love living in Whimble –
it's peaceful, convenient
and has a great
community spirit*

*I have wonderful
neighbours*

*The rail link is an
essential convenience*

How to get in touch

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

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www.eastdevon.gov.uk



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