Environmental Health

Neighbourhood Assessment

East Devon
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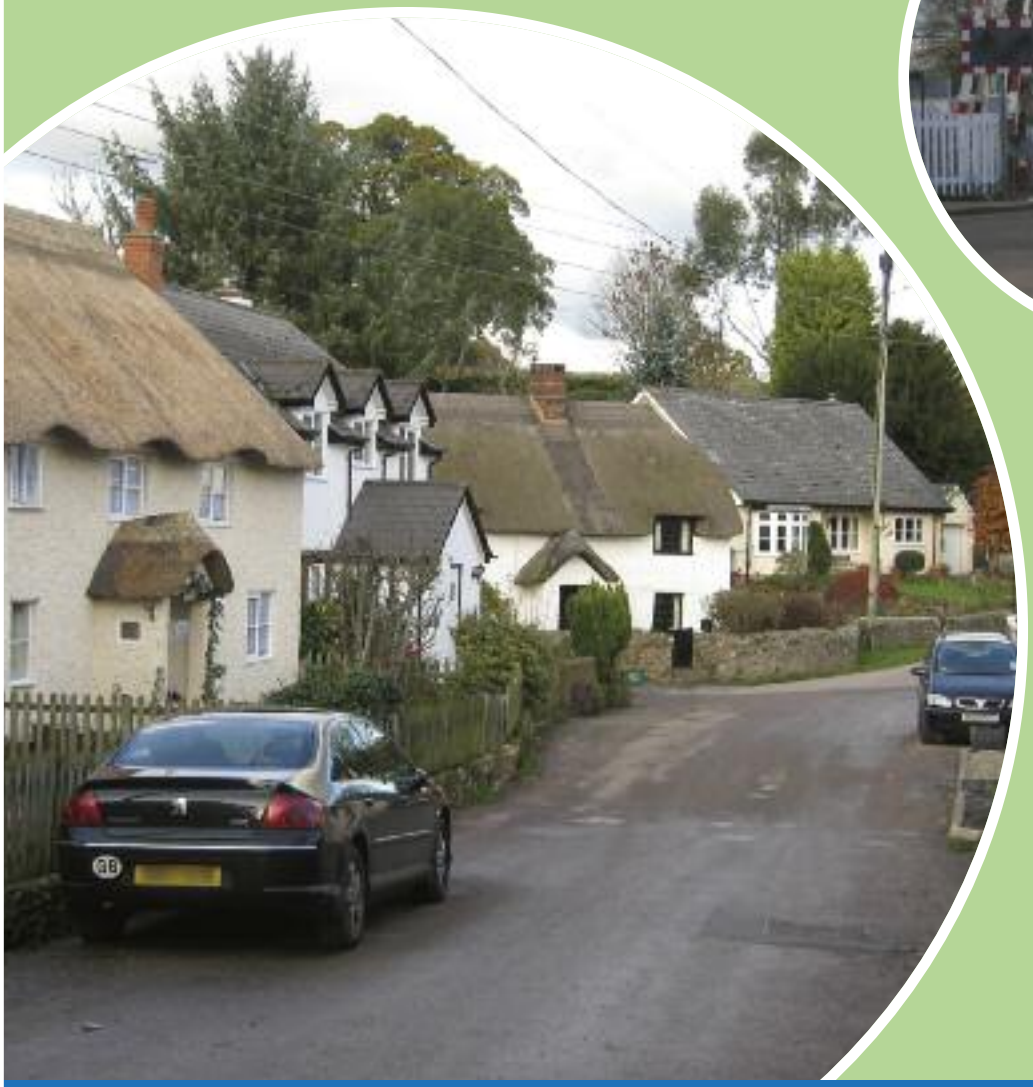
'YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND YOUR HEALTH'

Feniton

Winter 2010



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Feniton Neighbourhood Assessment

Autumn 2010

A Neighbourhood Assessment was organised by Officers from East Devon District Council's Environmental Health Service at Feniton in November 2010. They were joined by the police and together carried out a door-to-door survey in the village, as part of an initiative to raise awareness about many services available to East Devon residents.

REACT operative clearing litter and leaves in old Feniton

As well as the Neighbourhood Assessment, an open surgery was held in Feniton Village Hall, where an Environmental Health Officer was available all day to discuss local concerns.

During the survey residents were asked whether they had any comments about the services they currently receive from EDDC, and whether they wished to raise any concerns or complaints about their neighbourhood. They were also offered a home security check by the police, information on Home Safeguard and Devon Care and Repair.

Eligible householders were offered a free fire safety check and everyone who took part was asked whether they wished to attend a free life saving course if organised by The British Red Cross.

Over the past year the Environmental Health Service has dealt with sixty-two service requests and inspections in the parish of Feniton including:

- Thirteen pest control complaints concerning flies and rats
- Four consultations on the environmental impact of planning applications
- Five noise complaints concerning dogs, cockerels, music, etc
- One contaminated land enquiry
- Two food poisoning notifications
- Thirteen food inspections and food related advice and concerns
- One bonfire complaint
- Five housing complaints
- Three dog fouling complaints
- Eight complaints concerning agricultural odour
- One advice on keeping chickens
- Three agricultural notifications from Defra and spreading of bio-solids
- One animal boarding inspection
- Two waste disposal and fly tip issues

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Please recycle

Dogs

Dog fouling was said to be a concern to many residents. The worst affected areas were said to be the playing fields and pavements. The Council's Enforcement Officers have been visiting the village to speak to dog owners and will issue £80 fixed penalty tickets to anyone seen not clearing up after their dog.

There is a Dog Control Order across East Devon, which makes it 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.

If you see any person failing to clear up after their dog, please call Environmental Health on 01395 517457 with the details. They will then contact the owner and may be able to issue a fixed penalty ticket of £80.

Waste and recycling

Many people said they felt the new recycling system was a great improvement, and some residents praised their refuse collectors for their assistance. However, some residents asked why the Council do not take cardboard and plastic packaging, such as food trays and yoghurt pots.

East Devon District Council only collect materials that are able to be passed on to available reprocessors. Only plastic that is bottle shaped can currently be taken, as these are made from a high grade of plastic which is easy to recycle and sell on. The majority of plastic trays and other pots are a lower grade or blend of plastics, which are not as good to recycle and have very low value.

The current vehicles are now at full capacity, so it is not possible to collect cardboard, however it may be taken to your nearest recycling centre. Alternative ways of providing recycling facilities for cardboard will be considered following the completion of the new scheme roll out. Further information concerning recycling in East Devon can be obtained by visiting. www.eastdevon.gov.uk/faq_recycling.htm.

One resident requested a smaller landfill wheeled bin and others asked for garden waste to be included. StreetScene will issue smaller bins if they receive a formal request. Householders may purchase five plastic garden waste bags at a cost of £6.93 from StreetScene. Once filled, these can then be collected with normal waste. StreetScene can be contacted on 01395 571515 to report any refuse or recycling problems. More information can also be found on the Council's website at www.eastdevon.gov.uk/my_neighbourhood.

Police issues

There were several complaints about speeding throughout Feniton. The main areas of concern were Station Road, primarily adjacent to Feniton Primary School, and on the lanes between the old and new village. Some reported regularly seeing drivers using mobile phones whilst driving.

There were a small number of complaints about parked cars blocking access to properties and about dangerous parking at junctions obstructing visibility. The white lines at the junction of Ottery Road and Green Lane were said to be missing and we passed this on to Devon County Council to consider replacing in the future.

A few residents said they were concerned about underage drinking and noise from teenagers in the park. All reported concerns have been passed to the Neighbourhood Police Officer and PCSO for their information and they will be addressing residents' concerns and monitoring traffic and parking problems.

Feniton Railway Station

Some residents said they had difficultly reading the ticket machine on the platform of Feniton Station. We spoke to Network Rail whose spokesman said he was aware that there were problems with reading this screen. He said it would be difficult to move the machine, but confirmed that new-style screens which are easier to use in full sun were about to trialled. It is hoped that Feniton Station will be one of the stations included in these first trials for the new-style ticket machines.

Bonfires

Frequent smoky bonfires were said to be causing annoyance to a small number of residents. There is no restriction on what time of day a resident may have a bonfire to burn small amounts of dry garden waste at a domestic property, but you must not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

If you plan to have a bonfire, please ensure only small amounts of dry material are burnt. Do not light a fire when the wind is likely to carry the smoke over roads and other people's property. It is advisable to warn neighbours beforehand to give them the opportunity to close windows and remove washing. It is preferable to take waste to recycling centres or compost it. Plastics, rubber and building materials should not be burnt.

If you wish to discuss any concerns about bonfires in your neighbourhood, please call Environmental Health on 01395 517457.

Fireworks

There were complaints about fireworks being set off on evenings other than 5 November in the village and some residents enquired about the rules regarding the control of fireworks.

It is important to balance the wish to use fireworks with the community's right to peaceful enjoyment of their lives. The Fireworks Regulations 2004 makes it an offence for any person to use 'adult fireworks' between the hours of 11 pm and 7 am, except for permitted fireworks nights. These are: 5 November up to 12 midnight, Diwali up to 1 am, New Year's Eve up to 1 am, and Chinese New Year up to 1 am.

The misuse of fireworks may amount to a breach of the peace and should be reported to the police.

Fire safety

During the door-to-door survey, eligible residents were asked if they would like fire safety advice from Devon and Somerset Fire Service. A free fire safety visit is available to elderly, vulnerable, disabled, or low income families who wish to improve fire safety within their home. A Fire Officer may visit the property to carry out a short assessment, give advice and supply or install a long lasting, battery smoke detector.

To find out if you could be eligible for a free fire safety visit, please call Devon & Somerset Fire Service on Freephone 0800 7311 822 or email firekills@dsfire.gov.uk.

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. They are hoping to hold a free two-hour first aid course in Feniton in the near future on how to provide basic life support until the emergency services arrive.

When residents were asked whether they would consider attending the first aid course, at

least sixteen residents confirmed they would like to attend. If you are interested in taking part in a life saving course, please call Pamela Willerton on 0127 327918 or email pwillerton@redcross.org.uk for further details.

First aid tips for a Heart Attack

A heart attack is one of the most common life-threatening heart conditions in the UK. If you suspect someone is having a heart attack, sit the person down, call an ambulance immediately and, if they are conscious, give them a 300 mg tablet of aspirin to chew. The main risk is that the heart will stop beating, so be prepared to resuscitate if necessary.

Pests

Flies

There were a number of complaints by residents who said they were bothered by flies last summer. Environmental Health Officers received complaints at this time concerning large numbers of flies affecting homes in Feniton and Talewater.

There had been similar problems in previous years, which caused some distress to local people. At that time, the source was found to be a local free-range egg producer. During 2008 the farmer made a number of improvements to the operation and management of the poultry houses and there have been no further recurrences of fly infestation to date.

During June of this year, residents noticed an increase in fly activity, and also a severe odour problem which was traced to sludge haulage work being carried out by South West Water.

The Environment Agency followed up the odour complaint and an EDDC Environmental Health Officer investigated the flies. These were found to be a different species of fly from the ones associated with the poultry farm.

The sludge was being spread at two locations near the village. Only fully treated sludge was deposited, however this particular batch was considerably wetter than normal and coupled with the very warm weather, this provided the ideal breeding environment for a variety of flies. Environmental Health Officers worked with South West Water in order to resolve the problem, who stated the situation was unprecedented and they have now ensured that sludge in this condition is not deposited anywhere in East Devon again.

Rats

There were a number of rat sightings reported around the village. EDDC offer a reduced cost pest control service for rats on residential properties, provided on the Council's behalf by Rentokil Initial Plc. Details of the pest control service have been supplied to those who felt they required treatment and advice was given on how to reduce the likelihood of rats.

To request a pest control treatment please call 01395 516551. To discuss any rat infestation in your area please call Environmental Health on 01395 517457.

Street Lights

Some residents were unhappy about the time that the street lights were being switched off at night, and thought this could increase crime and street safety. However, other people said they were happy with the new 12.30 am switch-off time to save energy and reduce light pollution.

A spokesman for Devon County Council confirmed the light controls should switch off at 12.30 am and switch back on at 5.30 am. Residents should be aware that the controls are sensitive to

power fluctuations and power cuts, particularly from overhead supplies, which can lead to erratic switching times. It should be noted that time controls do not switch off and on precisely at these times as they do not have clocks.

Each light works independently and relies on light levels at the start and end of the day to work out an 'assumed midnight' and then uses this time to operate. When a control is affected by a power cut of supply fluctuation, it takes a few days to readjust prior to returning to normal part-night operation.

Devon Care & Repair

Care and Repair are a home improvement agency who 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.

Details of the scheme were discussed with residents during the Neighbourhood Assessment. Care and Repair also offer a 'handyperson scheme' which provides assistance with an assortment of small repairs around the home such as installing chains and security locks, 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.

Energy efficiency

During the survey residents were offered information concerning grants available from the Cosy Devon Scheme, which offers free or greatly discounted loft and cavity wall insulation to homeowners and private tenants.

Seven householders requested application forms during the Neighbourhood Assessment. Many residents may also be entitled to assistance with heating costs. Residents who requested help have now been contacted.

If you would like more information on financial help available for insulation or heating, or a free no-obligation survey, please call 0800 512 012 to speak to an advisor at Energy Action Devon.

Litter

Most residents of Feniton village said they felt their neighbourhood was clean and free of litter, however some residents reported frequent litter left around the school and shops.

Some people felt that SITA leave recycling goods around during collections. These concerns were passed to SITA, who have been asked to ensure they clear up rubbish they spill. StreetScene's REACT operatives were also in Feniton during the Neighbourhood Assessment clearing leaves and litter picking.

Home Safeguard

Details of the Council's Home Safeguard scheme were discussed during the survey. Home Safeguard is a 24-hour personal emergency response service based in Sidmouth and

is available to anyone who needs to summon help urgently, such as vulnerable or housebound individuals.

The service allows residents to call for help and be immediately linked to staff in Sidmouth who will discuss any problems and call relatives or emergency services if necessary. If you would like to know more about the Home Safeguard service please call 01395 519739 or visit www.eastdevon.gov.uk/homesafeguard.

Miscellaneous

Vehicles parked in garden
Many people were concerned about a property that had approximately eight old vehicles parked in the garden, which were said to be rusting and unsightly. This was felt to be detrimental to the local environment.

These requests were passed to our Planning Enforcement team, who confirmed they would be writing to the owner of the premises before the end of 2010, requesting that they clear and tidy the site. Failure to carry out this request may result in a Section s215 Notice being issued to ensure the land is clean and tidy.

Cricket ground
There was a request for the cricket net to be removed until the start of the next cricket season and some concern about the danger and damage to properties from cricket balls. A member of Feniton Cricket Club said he would ensure the net was taken down as soon as possible. The Club is also considering the possibility of moving the pitch to an alternative site further away from any properties. However, no decision has been made to date as the move will depend on finances.

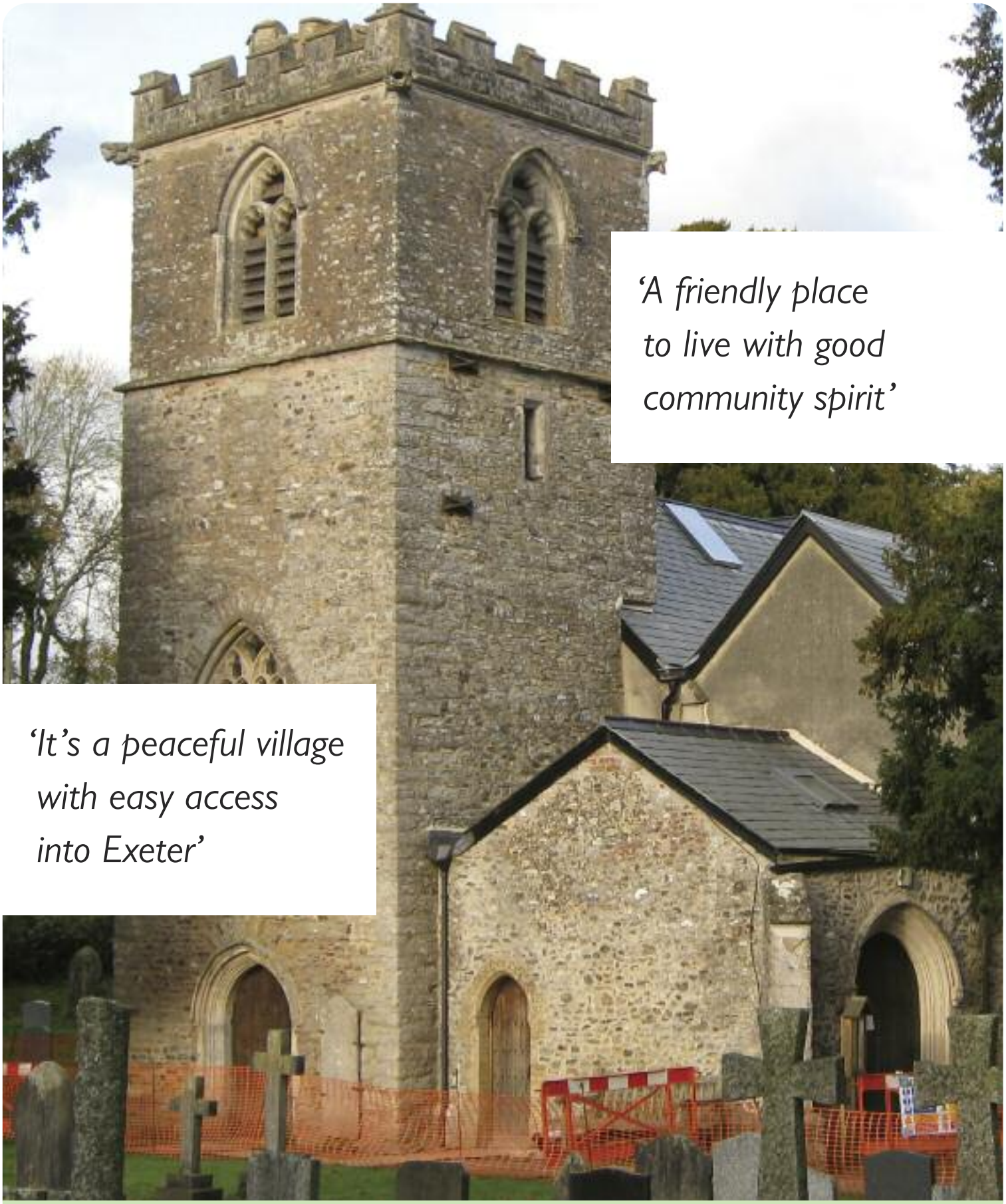
Flood works grant
A resident enquired about a grant which he understood had been awarded for flood relief works in Feniton Village in the vicinity of St Andrew's Church. A spokesman from the Environment Agency confirmed that some funding had been awarded and it was hoped that works would be carried out in this area in the near future.

Travelplan grant
There was a concern that the Travelplan grant applied for by Feniton Primary School had not been received. A spokesman for Devon County Council confirmed they were still awaiting confirmation about this year's travelplan grants from the Government, but it was felt these grants may not now be available due to the recent government cut-backs.

Paths and pedestrians
Some residents highlighted the need for land owners to keep their boundaries cut back. They felt that overhanging brambles and branches were a hazard to pedestrians, especially on roads where there are no footpaths. There was also a wish to see a footpath created between old and new Feniton, as there were concerns about the safety of pedestrians walking this route with pushchairs and young children.

Planning costs
One resident complained about EDDC's Planning section and the costs they had incurred. A Senior Planning Officer has since been in contact with them to discuss the matter further.

Dangerous structures and ongoing works
Residents were asked if they had any concerns about dangerous structures, buildings, or ongoing works in the area. There were no reported incidents but if you wish to speak to an Officer about any building works or structures in the area please call Building Control on 01395 517482.



'A friendly place to live with good community spirit'

'It's a peaceful village with easy access into Exeter'

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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