

Environmental Health Neighbourhood Assessment



'YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND YOUR HEALTH'

Colyton

Spring 2011



www.eastdevon.gov.uk

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A Neighbourhood Assessment was organised by EDDC's Environmental Health Service in Colyton in March 2011. They worked in partnership with the police, and together carried out a door-to-door survey in the town.

Residents were asked whether they had any comments about Council services they receive and whether they wished to raise any concerns or complaints about their neighbourhood. They were offered a home security check by the police and fire safety advice from Devon and Somerset Fire Service.

A representative from the British Red Cross joined the teams to offer people a free life saving course organised by The British Red Cross to take place in the future.

A drop-in surgery was also held on the same day where an Environmental Health Officer was available for residents from Colyton and Colyford to call in to discuss local concerns.

The teams visited around 200 properties in the village and over ninety residents were interviewed and completed the survey. Eighty-four per cent of those spoken to said they were satisfied with the services they currently received from EDDC. The main areas of concern in the parish of Colyton were as follows in this newsletter.



- Over the past year the Environmental Health Service has dealt with over sixty-seven requests for service in Colyton including:
- two pest control complaints concerning rats
 - five consultations on the environmental impact of proposed planning applications
 - twelve complaints about noise including eight barking dogs
 - twenty-six food hygiene inspections
 - one riding licence inspection
 - one contaminated land enquiry
 - seventeen dairy farm consultations
 - five odour and two sewage complaints
 - five complaints about dust or fumes
 - two bonfire complaints
 - six housing service requests
 - two requests for advice about asbestos removal

Waste and recycling

Most residents said they were happy with the existing separated recycling and waste collections, but many said they wished that cardboard and other plastics could now be included.

The current trucks do not have the capacity to take cardboard and residents are advised to either take it to a recycling centre, use the landfill bin or home compost it. However, StreetScene are considering the possibility of providing cardboard recycling banks within the East Devon area. They plan to consult with Parish Councils about this and the location of bins in the near future.

A few elderly residents enquired about help with their refuse bins. Assisted collections are available for some residents who struggle with their bins. If you need help, StreetScene can be contacted on 01395 517528

Many residents were very unhappy that Devon County Council closed Seaton tip at the end of March 2011. Some thought this would lead to an increase in fly tipping and domestic bonfires in the area, and many said they had no means of travelling to Sutton Tip.

For green waste, residents may consider using Otter Rotters, who now operate a fortnightly kerbside green waste collection service in Colyton and Colyford.

HOW DOES THE SCHEME WORK?

- Buy an Otter Rotter garden bag for £4 from authorised outlets
- Buy your tags at £1.50, each one allows one garden waste bag to be emptied
- Put your bags out on collection day with the right number of tags
- You can include grass, bush prunings, hedge clippings, branches and leaves.

Otter Rotters can be contacted on 07837 477050 or info@otterrotters.co.uk or visit their website at <http://home.btconnect.com/otterrotters/garden.htm> for more information.

Full details of all Council waste collection days can be found at www.eastdevon.gov.uk.

Dogs

Numerous people raised dog fouling as an issue that concerned them. The most frequent complaint being that some dog walkers failed to clear up after their dogs on public footpaths by the river, the church yard and on town pavements, especially by the school. Dog walkers are reminded to pick up after their dogs on all land or face a fine of £80. Hanging bags of excrement in trees and hedges is also an offence and carries the same fine.

Some residents thought that all dogs should be on leads and others felt there were insufficient dog waste bins provided in the town. EDDC currently have over 350 dog bins across the district. They are emptied three times a week and around 270 tons of dog excrement is collected each year from them. The Council is looking into the possibility of sponsorship by local businesses for any additional dog bins in the future. Litter bins can be used if no dog bin is available.

Additional dog fouling signs have been installed near Colyton Primary School and Enforcement Officers have been visiting the town to speak to dog walkers in the areas highlighted. Fixed penalty tickets of £80 will be issued to anyone witnessed not clearing up after their dog. It is 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 with the exception of Forestry Commission land, where site specific rules apply.

One person complained about a nuisance dog barking and this is being investigated by an Officer who will speak to the owner and give guidance.



There was a request by a Parish Councillor for a dog ban on Colyton Playing Field. This request will be discussed further with the Parish Council. Parish Councils also have the power to create their own dog control orders.

If you witness any person failing to clear up after their dog, please call Environmental Health on 01395 517457, who will contact the owner and may issue a fixed penalty ticket of £80.

Traffic and parking

Parking problems were mentioned by a large number of residents. These ranged from lack of parking spaces to inconsiderate parking. Some residents suggested additional yellow lines or residents parking permits, whilst others wished neighbours and visitors would be more considerate about parking their vehicles to ensure front doors are not restricted for emergency access.

Most people acknowledged that the narrow streets were a feature of the town and little could be done to increase parking outside town centre properties. One resident called for pavements to be created outside road front properties and also suggested creating a one-way systems or a pedestrian area in the town square.

There was a request for an additional school warning sign on Sidmouth Road. We passed this on to Devon County Highways who said, additional signs would only be considered if they were highlighted as part of the Safety Audit process for highway improvement schemes, but this had not been raised as part of the safety audit process to date. DCC can be contacted on 0845 155 1004

Some people felt there should be more parking enforcement in the town. Parking enforcement is now dealt with by EDDC and traffic officers are currently visiting the town at least twice a day.

There were also strong concerns expressed about the possible increase in HGVs coming through Colyford if the 7.5 tonne weight restrictions are imposed on the route through Axmouth. It was also highlighted that there are existing traffic problems with buses from Colyton Grammar School and the tram crossing at times.

Police concerns

As part of the neighbourhood assessment, residents were asked if they would like home security advice from the police and three householders requested this service.

A number of householders said they had been affected by minor anti-social behaviour. Several people had experienced youths banging on their windows and doors in the evenings, this was said



to be especially distressing for older residents. Some said they were aware of underage drinking in the church yard. However several residents praised the young people in Colyton, and one resident said that since they had moved there, they were impressed with how polite and friendly they were.

A few people had had items stolen from their gardens and there were reports of vehicles being damaged in Colyton car park and Grove Hill at night.

One father asked whether it would be possible for his son to take a cycling proficiency test. His details were passed to Seaton Police who contacted the family to offer assistance.

Traffic speeding through the town was mentioned by many people as a danger to pedestrians, especially where there are no pavements. Some also said that tractors frequently went through the town at what appeared to be an inappropriate speed, and it was felt that this increased the damage caused to road surfaces. There were calls for HGVs and tractors to be banned from some side roads.

The details of all the issues raised have been

passed to Seaton Police for their information. Residents are urged to report any non emergency incidents to the Police on 0845 277 7444. The emergency number remains as 999.

Litter

Several people thought there were parts of the town where litter was a problem. The worst affected areas were said to be in the Square between the food shops and the Town Hall. Hill Head picnic site was also mentioned as a problem area.

These concerns have been passed to StreetScene, whose operatives already visit the town on a daily basis. They have now been targeting the problem areas highlighted for additional litter picks and will issue fixed penalty tickets with an £80 fine to anyone witnessed dropping litter in the area.

Building Control

Residents were asked if they had any concerns about dangerous structures, buildings or ongoing works in the area.

Several people expressed concern about the stone wall in Sidmouth Road, which appeared to be leaning over the pavement. Their concerns were passed to a Building Control Officer who will carry out an inspection of the wall and establish whether any action is needed to be taken. One resident also requested sound proofing advice, as recent renovation work carried out by their neighbour resulted in a noise issue through the party wall.

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

Pests

Rats had been seen in and around the town by many people. EDDC operate a pest control service for rats in residential properties. This service is

provided on the Council's behalf by Rentokil.

Many types of pest can be treated and the treatment for rats is available for domestic properties at a subsidised rate of £43 for three treatments.

To reduce the likelihood of rats on your property, do not add cooked food to compost heaps, as rats require a food source, water and shelter. If you wish to feed the birds, use high suspended bird feeders with seeds and nuts, clear up any spillage daily and do not use bread or food scraps. If you suspect you have rats, stop feeding the birds until the treatment is completed. It may help to clear any overgrown areas and check for holes and runs under sheds and around fences.



To request a rat treatment please call EDDC's switchboard on 01392 516551 or to discuss any pest problems in your area, please call Environmental Health on 01395 517457.

Bonfires

Although there is currently no restriction on what time of day a resident may have a bonfire to burn dry garden waste at a domestic property, they should not cause a nuisance to their neighbours. Frequent smoky bonfires were said to be causing annoyance to a small number of residents in and around Colyton.

If you plan to have an occasional 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. Commercial waste should not be burnt.

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

Pot holes

Many people complained about the pot holes in and around the town, especially those around Coly Vale. Some cyclists said how dangerous the situation was for them. Devon County Council is working through a programme of repairing pot holes across the county and we passed residents concerns about the roads around Colyton to them. Pot holes can be reported to Devon County Council at www.devon.gov.uk/index/transportroads/roads/road_maintenance/pothole.htm or by phoning 0845 155 1004.

The British Red Cross

Those residents surveyed were asked whether they would be interested in attending a free first aid course in the near future and over twenty-five people said they would.



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 the near future on how to provide basic life support until the emergency services arrive.

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.

Other issues

OVERGROWN TREE

Two residents were concerned about an overgrown sycamore tree in The Butts, which they felt blocked light from their property. They had previously complained to Devon County Council but said they had no response. We logged a service request with DCC and asked them to respond directly with the householder as soon as possible.

EMISSIONS

A resident enquired about the emissions from CeramTec. This enquiry has been logged to an Environmental Health Officer who is currently investigating the matter.

TANNERY

There was an enquiry about whether the Tannery holds a pollution licence. This Tannery does not require a permit from EDDC as their processes use natural products rather than toxic solvents.

NOISE

There was a complaint concerning an air conditioning unit at a commercial property in the town. An Environmental Health Officer has written to the complainant to offer advice and information and is awaiting a response.

BUS SERVICE

There were concerns that buses were too infrequent to and from the town and some felt it was especially difficult to access larger towns such as Honiton easily from Colyton.

TOWN MILL

The future of The Town Mill in Rosemary Lane was highlighted by several people who felt it was beginning to look in a state of disrepair and hoped it would be renovated. EDDC's Planning service were asked whether there were any current applications for restoration works, and they confirmed that planning permission had been granted to convert, or build three dwellings on the site, but this permission had expired in February 2011. The site is within the built-up area boundary of the town and a further application may be submitted in the future although none have been received at this time.

Fire safety

During the door-to-door survey residents were asked if they had a working smoke detector and whether they required 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 may be able to supply or install a long lasting, battery smoke detector.

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

Devon Care and 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 and six people requested further information and contact details.

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.

Home Safeguard

Details of the Council's Home Safeguard scheme were discussed during the survey and four householders requested application forms. 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.

It 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 for further details, or visit www.eastdevon.gov.uk/homesafeguard.

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. Fifteen householders requested application forms and further information. Many residents may also be entitled to assistance with heating costs; those who requested help have now been contacted.

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





‘friendly pubs and wonderful countryside, we love it here’

‘I was pleasantly surprised – when they say it’s going to be done, it’s done’

– Quote from resident about EDDC’s services



‘I feel safe and I wouldn’t wish to live anywhere else’



‘It’s a lovely place to live and the bin men are very obliging’

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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