

District Councillor Helen Parr Report April 22-

- **A council tax rebate of £150** will be given to every East Devon household living in an A, B, C or D band property. EDDC is administering this scheme of government grants.
- A new **Action on Poverty Fund** has been opened by East Devon District Council (EDDC) to help reduce poverty in East Devon. The fund can accept applications for grants of between £500 and £5,000 for projects and activities to help reduce poverty in East Devon. For more information on this and other grants see EDDC website.
- **The council is ending the use of Glyphosate based herbicides** for weed control in favour of Vinegar based RHS endorsed sprays and manual control methods. £67k will be added to the Capital program to purchase 2 Hotfoam machines. The council will also be withdrawing from spraying in some areas including highways around town centres, which the council currently does although it is not within the remit.
- **River Axe Special Area of Conservation-** Natural England has advised East Devon District Council that because of the sensitivity of the River Axe, which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation, new planning permissions for new homes, and other developments providing overnight accommodation, should not be granted in the catchment of the river unless they can be shown to be “nutrient neutral“.

The fundamental problem is that there are excessive levels of phosphates entering the river. Most phosphates come from agricultural activity, including run-off from farmed land. A sizeable amount of the remainder however, is a result of human activity associated with the houses we live in and business premises and buildings we use- ie. the waste water that is generated.

On farm projects to improve the quality of water discharge have been supported and funded by Natural England and the Environment Agency for many years. A mitigation scheme for new dwellings will however need to provide mitigation in perpetuity and so is proving much harder to achieve.

EDDC is now one of over 70 local authorities affected by this issue. Both Colyford and Colyton are outside of the River Axe Special Area of Conservation.

Axminster however is within the catchment area. This possible embargo on residential building could have a serious effect on housing numbers in the Local Plan and put at risk the 5 year land supply.

- The Personnel Committee received a Confidential report on a **A Learning Review costing £18k**, which was carried out by the Local Government Association to try to improve relationships at the council. Member/Staff relationships have been a matter of concern, raised in Staff Wellbeing Surveys. The LGA made a number of recommendations, some of which were accepted by the Personnel Committee 22 March, including strengthening the Code of Conduct; improving procedures for Grievances and Employment matters, and increasing training and support for new Leaders/ Portfolio Holders and Administrations.