

Hi all

March is getting ready for audit month in my Parish. I don't know about you but I do find it increasingly difficult each year to find a reliable internal auditor. If anyone knows of someone who does this freelance for Parish Councils then please do share.

Carole

Rough Sleepers

In 2018 the Government set out a bold cross-government plan of actions to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough with the aim of halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it altogether by 2027. Mid Devon District Council is also committed to these plans and bid for funding from The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments (MHCLG) to help reduce rough sleeping in the District. Mid Devon and East Devon District Council secured funding to employ 3 Rough Sleeper Navigators to work across the two Districts. These navigators provide a rapid response to reports of people sleeping rough and engage with the rough sleeper and provide a support service including:



- help into emergency accommodation (during periods of severe weather)
- help into hostel accommodation, private rented or supported housing
- help with ID and benefits
- information and advice about support services
- assistance with linking in with health services
- access to individual budgets

If you would like to tell us about a rough sleeper in your community please visit the Street Link website: <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/> or email the Housing Options team at housingoptions@middevon.gov.uk with information about the rough sleeper i.e. location description.

Parish Websites hosted by MDDC

The Parish website domain name has now changed from parish.middevon.gov.uk to middevonparish.co.uk.

How this will affect you

The public links used to access the website and edit your websites using the Umbraco CMS have changed.

Purpose	Existing Link	New Link
Public link to view website	parish.middevon.gov.uk/<Parish>	middevonparish.co.uk/<Parish>
Umbraco CMS to edit website	parish.middevon.gov.uk/umbraco	middevonparish.co.uk/umbraco

What you need to do

To maintain existing links that have been used in third party websites and by your parishioners I have added a rewrite rule so older links using the parish.middevon.gov.uk domain will still work and point to your new domain. This will only be until 1st April 2020.

Please ensure that if links are being used to access your website from third party websites and your parishioners you contact the website owners or add a message to your homepage to notify them of the change so their links don't break after the 1st April.

Do you know what to publish and when?

Agenda's—3 clear days prior to the meeting you have summoned. This means up on your website and on the noticeboard. You should also publish any papers and material to be discussed at your meeting (unless that information is confidential)

Draft Minutes—No later than 28 days after the meeting has taken place —your draft minutes must be published on your website.

The transparency code for smaller authorities 2014 states: The data and information specified in this Code must be published on a website which is publicly accessible free of charge. This includes agenda's and draft minutes.

Although Clerks in Mid Devon are pretty compliant to the legislation we did find that 11 Parish Councils did not publish either agendas or minutes on their websites within the timeframes prescribed. A further 10 councils did not publish the draft minutes within 28 days.

Why does it matter? It is actually unlawful to make a decision, especially a decision to spend money, without sufficient (three clear days) warning. If you have not convened a meeting correctly then the public can demand that the meeting does not take place (as occurred with one of our parishes recently).

Complaints regarding parish councils

Constituents may wish to complain about the decisions, the procedures, or the conduct of members or staff of their parish council. There are few remedies available in this regard outside of the four-yearly elections to the parish council.

The route to make a complaint depends upon the subject of complaint: there is no single organisation which oversees parish councils. The Government has taken the view that parish councils are accountable to their electorate principally through the ballot box. The most recent Parliamentary Question on the issue of complaints was answered as follows:

‘There are various mechanisms in place for members of the public to make complaints about their town or parish council.

These include: using the parish council’s complaints procedure; raising the matter at the annual parish meeting; questioning, or making an objection to, the auditor during the public inspection period of accounts; or by joining with a group of local electors to call for a parish poll on the issue. In instances of councillor misconduct, complaints can be made to the principal council’s monitoring officer who can investigate.

Central Government does not have the power to intervene in parish council matters and believes that the current local system of redress is proportionate to the sector and consistent with this Government's principles on localism.’

Complaints about the behaviour of parish councillors, or employees of the parish council, should be addressed to the chair of the parish council in the first instance.

In general, it is not possible to have a parish council’s decision reversed at a higher level unless it can be demonstrated that the decision is unlawful. Like other public authorities, parish councils are subject to action in the courts and judicial review. Though each parish council has a relationship with the district or unitary council in whose area it lies, the district or unitary council has little power of control or direction over the parish council. Concerns over the legality of parish councils’ actions can be referred to the monitoring officer of the district or unitary authority in the area.

Does your Council have a complaints procedure that could be provided to a member of the public should they request one? If not I attach a model procedure which your Council could adopt and publish on your website.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has opened a public consultation on its draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for Mid Devon District Council.

The draft recommendations propose that:

Mid Devon should be represented by 42 councillors, the same number as present

Mid Devon should have 21 wards, three fewer than there are now

The boundaries of all wards should change

The public can view the proposed changes via an interactive map which shows existing and proposed boundaries, as well as leave comments and suggest alternative boundaries on the Commission's consultation portal.

Alternatively they may wish to write or email the Commission.

Review Officer (Mid Devon)

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1st Floor, Windsor House

50 Victoria Street

London

SW1H 0TL

Email: reviews@lgbce.org.uk



Professor Colin Mellors, Chair of the Commission, said: “We are publishing recommendations for a new pattern of wards across Mid Devon and we are keen to hear what local people think of the recommendations. Our review aims to deliver electoral equality for local voters. This means that each councillor represents a similar number of people, so that everyone’s vote in council elections is worth roughly the same, regardless of where you live.

“We also want to ensure that our recommendations reflect the interests and identities of local communities across Mid Devon and that the pattern of wards can help the council deliver effective local government for local people.

“We will consider all the submissions we receive, whoever they are from and whether your evidence applies to the whole district or just a part of it.”

Once the Commission has considered all the responses to the consultation, it aims to publish its final recommendations in June 2020 and, subject to all the necessary scrutiny processes, the new electoral arrangements are scheduled to come into effect at the district elections in 2023.

The public consultation will run until 13 April 2020. The Commission’s full report on its draft recommendations can be found at lgbce.org.uk.

Meet the Parish

We are a large and diverse District with Parish and Town Councils dotted across the landscape but how well do we know the history of our fellow parishes? I have introduced this section to celebrate the history of our Parishes. If you would like to promote some additional information on your Parish please do let me know.

Bampton

The pretty historic town of Bampton, in mid-west Devon, is situated on the southern fringes of the Exmoor national park in the deep valley of the river Batherm. It is about two miles from the Somerset border, to the north of Tiverton, off the A396. The town's origins date back to about 700AD and contain many indications of the Saxon presence. These include local place names and ground works. Bampton's centre has been declared a conservation area and there are many listed buildings, some dating back to the early 17th century.



Bampton takes its floral displays very seriously having won Britain in Bloom national award on at least five occasions. It also won the world event in 1999. Bampton Fair, held on the last Thursday in October each year, existed long before King Henry III granted it a charter in 1258 and is one of the oldest fairs in the country. It was particularly famous for its sales of Exmoor ponies.

Bow

BOW (Latin: place at the arched bridge), originally a street-village on the old road between Crediton and Okehampton and lying in the undulating countryside between Dartmoor and Exmoor, is the geographical centre of Devon. Bow parish comprises 2,962 acres; a blend of rich red farmland in the north with contrasting environmentally rich grassland and trees stretching south to the boundary. Bow village comprises a blend of traditional cob and thatch properties alongside more modern dwellings. Much residential development has been seen in recent years. With outlying hamlets at Nymet Tracey, Hillerton and (former) Bow Station, population at 2011 census stood around 1,100.



Some farms are recorded in Domesday and Hillerton was granted a Saxon Charter.

Paddocks Well (holy well or sacred/Celtic spring) is at Nymet Tracey and a 3rd millennium BC woodhenge lies in the west of the parish.

The 12th century parish church of St Bartholomew is at Nymet Tracey, whilst the village has a Congregational Chapel and a Gospel Hall. A new primary school was built in 1994, a new medical practice opened in 2010 and a small supermarket serves most daily needs. Bow also boasts a traditional public house and a water garden centre with post office. A good regular bus service runs to Exeter, Barnstaple and Okehampton.

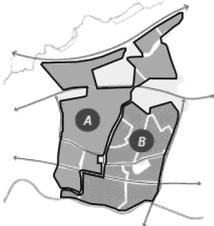
Bow has a wealth of small and not so small businesses, providing local employment. Many active clubs, societies and organisations thrive; some extant for generations, others recently reformed and enjoying a resurgence following a lapse of some years. Together they entertain, exercise and educate.

Uniquely, Bow retains its own water supply, with many households and some commercial premises having enjoyed their own Bow Water since 1859. Bow Parish Council is custodian trustee of Bow Waterworks (reg. charity).

Public Consultation Event – Tiverton EUE - Area B

Mid Devon District Council is hosting a consultation event. It relates to the Masterplanning of the final area (Area B) of the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (EUE).

The Tiverton EUE Masterplan SPD was adopted in 2014 and revised in 2018. Whilst it covered the whole of the EUE land area, it was not able to consider all of the site to the same degree of detail. This was due to the absence of some site wide survey work on land to the rear of properties on the southern side of Post Hill. The area of land known as Area B:



Mid Devon District Council planning policy requires the whole area to be masterplanned prior to any development on it. The Draft Area B Masterplan is now available for comment.

You are invited to respond to the consultation of Area B, which takes place between:

27th February to 9th April 2020

Four staffed events are proposed where Officers will be present to answer any questions:

Monday 2nd March 5pm - 8pm at the Exe Room, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Saturday 14th March 9am -12pm at the Exe Room, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Wednesday 18th March 4pm – 7pm Halberton Village Hall, Halberton, Nr Tiverton

Friday 27th March 11am - 1pm The Pannier Market, Tiverton.

Documents associated with the consultation are available to view on:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/TivEUEAreaBMasterplan>

and at the Council Offices, Phoenix House, Tiverton from 27th February 2020 during normal working hours. A summarized version of the display boards will be available throughout the whole consultation period in the main foyer of Phoenix House, Tiverton and the main foyer of Tiverton Town Hall.

Paper copies of a Question Summary Sheet (that assists those wishing to comment) will also be available from the main foyer at Phoenix House, Tiverton.

Comments can be submitted via a survey from the following link:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/TivEUEAreaBMasterplan>

Written responses posted/delivered to: Tiverton EUE (Area B) Public Consultation, Growth Economy and Delivery, Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Tiverton EX16 6PP.

Public Consultation Event – Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan

Mid Devon District Council is hosting a consultation event. It relates to the production of a Masterplan and Delivery Plan SPD for Cullompton Town Centre.

It will form the basis for the regeneration of the town; enhancing the town's economic prospects and providing a clear strategy to ensure the town meets its full potential as an attractive and thriving town in the 21st century.

The masterplan is being prepared in the context of the major projects planned in and around Cullompton, including

- North west Cullompton urban extension
- New homes allocated to the east of the town
- The proposed Culm Garden Village with up to 5,000 new homes, new jobs, schools and local centre
- A Heritage Action Zone which will see investment into Cullompton's historic high street, and
- Potential for the reopening of Cullompton railway station.

Mid Devon District Council have engaged consultants to produce a Masterplan and Delivery Plan. Before a Masterplan can be adopted, two stages of public consultation are required. The first consultation stage considers the scope of the Masterplan and any key issues. The second consultation stage considers the draft masterplan following receipt of comments from stage one. This consultation event is the first consultation stage.

Consultation material has been produced and is available for comment. Mid Devon District Council would welcome your comments on it.

You are invited to respond to the consultation which takes place between:

25th February and 15th April 2020.

Four staffed events are proposed where Officers will be present to answer any questions:

- Wednesday 4th March (Town Hall, 1 High Street, Cullompton) 10am - 2pm
- Friday 13th March (Foyer of Tesco, Station Road, Cullompton) 2.30pm – 6pm
- Saturday 14th March (Farmers Market, Bull Ring, Cullompton) 9.30am – 12.30pm
- Monday 16th March (Hayridge Centre, 1 Exeter Hill, Cullompton) 4pm - 7pm

Public Consultation Event – Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan— Continued

Documents associated with the consultation will be available to view on:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/CullyTCMasterplan>

or in person at:

Cullompton Town Hall, 1 High Street, Cullompton. EX15 1AB, and

The Hayridge Centre, Devon Centre, 1 Exeter Hill, Cullompton. EX15 1DJ

Paper copies of a Question Summary Sheet (to assist those wishing to comment) will be available from the Town Hall and Hayridge Centre from 25th February 2020 during normal working hours.

Comments can be submitted via a survey by visiting:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/CullyTCMasterplan>

Written responses may be delivered to:

Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan Public Consultation, The Hayridge Centre, 1 Exeter Hill, Cullompton. EX15 1DJ

Or delivered / posted to:

Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan and Delivery Plan Public Consultation, Growth Economy and Delivery, Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Tiverton EX16 6PP.

Or emailed to:

econdev@middevon.gov.uk



Connecting Devon and Somerset Update

Please find attached the latest programme update from Connecting Devon and Somerset which you may wish to share with your elected Members and colleagues.

This briefing includes the outcome of the settlement with Gigaclear and the launch of a new procurement process.

An additional briefing summarising the achievements of the CDS programme is also attached for information.

A news release announcing the launch of the new procurement process has been issued and a copy is attached.

Best wishes,

Peter Doyle, Head of External Affairs, Devon County Council, Mob: 07971 545286

Parish Council Says Sorry for Rainfall

CALVERTON PARISH COUNCIL has said it 'deeply regrets' today's rainfall after receiving several complaints from villagers.

'People complain to us all the time about things that aren't our responsibility,' said the Parish Clerk .

'Sometimes it's quicker and easier to say sorry even when it's not our fault. It saves a lot of grief, long term.'

'I'm appalled by all this rain in the village today,' said resident Stella Pipette, a Daily Mail reader and horse owner who thinks climate change is made up.

'I know I shouldn't instantly complain to the Parish Council about everything, but ... ' Next week, the Parish Council will be apologising for other things it has no power to do anything about including the UK not winning Eurovision since 1997, Frank Lampard leaving Derby County FC and Mr Bean having never been funny.

'It was just like the summer of 1976 in the village last week,' said Stella.

'All the grass turned to sand and we had to ride around on camels.'

Keeping up to date

Press Releases Issued

<https://www.middevonnewscentre.info/>

Dates for Mid Devon District Council Meetings

<https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

10th March—Environment PDG—5.30pm

11th March—Planning Committee—2.15pm

12th March—Economy PDG—5.30pm

17th March—Homes PDG—2.15pm

24th March—Community PDG—2.15pm

24th March—Audit Committee—5.30pm

26th March—Cabinet—6.00pm

Dates for Devon County Council meetings:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx>