

## **County Councillor's Report, August 2018**

### **County Council meeting: Wilmington A35, sexual harrassment and Brexit**

On 19 July, Devon County Council approved the proposal that they will be involved in discussions with Highways England to secure new proposals for improvements and the earliest possible implementation. I was also involved, with members of the A35 Action Group and the local Speedwatch team, in a BBC Spotlight report on the Wilmington case.

The Council also approved the decision of the Standards Committee finding Cllr Brian Greenslade, former Lib Dem leader of the Council, guilty of sexual harrassment and bullying 10-15 years ago. I am satisfied that the Council has taken this extremely seriously and has taken all measures possible against Cllr Greenslade, but we cannot require him to relinquish his seat. In the meeting, I supported the protest by Cllr Emma Brennan against his continuing presence in the Council.

The Council also discussed the threat, as a result of a recent parliamentary vote, that the UK may lose frictionless customs arrangements with the EU. I warned of the threat to 44 per cent of our trade - and more of Devon's, including agricultural goods - which a 'no deal' Brexit represents. However the Council majority voted again not to take a position on the issue.

### **Speed Limits and Highways Maintenance Working Groups**

I am on both these working groups at County Hall and attended the first meeting of the Speed Limits Group on 17 July. I will report on our findings in due course.

### **Colyton Traffic Group**

I chaired this meeting on 23 July with representatives of 5 parishes. Neighbourhood Traffic Officer, Steve Kelly, updated us on forthcoming repairs between Northleigh Cross and Offwell Brook, below Drummerstone Cross, Offwell, and at Kingsdon, Colyton. Councillors made vigorous representations about other issues which I shall be following up with Steve..

### **Colyford Vehicle Activated Signs**

I may be tempting fate, but I am informed that the first sign (funded by my Locality Budget) will finally be erected by 1 August. The new pole required for the second sign is now in place, so when Colyton Parish Council and Colyford organisations have finalised funding arrangements, it can be ordered. I am told design work on the crossing is continuing.

### **Seaton Down Hill speeding**

I met with local residents on site and have made further suggestions about enforcement and signage to the police and Highways respectively.

### **The future of the community hospitals: decision postponed but the threat remains**

On 10 July, I attended a briefing on the Devon NHS Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), at which county councillors were told that there was 'no rush' to decide the

future of community hospital buildings. Contrary to Dr Simon Kerr's suggestion in April that decisions would be made in July, Dr Sonja Manton (STP) said there was no early deadline. She also confirmed to me that no decisions will be made about buildings until after the conclusion of the 'community conversations' such as Seaton Area Health Matters and Honiton Health Matters.

However Dr Manton was launching the STP's two-year report, which report states: *We know a large amount of space in our community hospital buildings is underused. The revenue cost of our community hospital estates is in the order of £20 million; money the NHS could use to improve other services. Working with other public sector partners, as part of the One Public Estate initiative, we will review the space that is required to deliver care, and plan to consolidate the number of sites to free up estate and generate money, which can be re-invested in technology and infrastructure.* The threat of closure remains and the issue is likely to come to a head around the end of the year.

### **Seaton Area Health Matters goes forward, developing case for local hospital**

I have attended several meetings which have helped the new Seaton Area Health Matters forum take shape (I am also kept informed of Honiton Health Matters). With Dr Mark Welland (Chair of the League of Friends), Geoff Pook (EDDC, Beer), Jack Rowland (Seaton Town Council) and Victoria Parry (HALFF), I am a member of a working group which is considering how the health needs of the area, services which can be provided locally and the community hospital can be matched.

I was informed by the RD&E earlier in the month that they were taking stock of local services and would share the data in a conversation with the local forums, with a view to decisions about the future organisation of services in local communities. However I have heard unofficially that this will not now happen, which is disappointing, and I am seeking clarification.

### **Honiton maternity services**

It also appeared from the STP meeting that midwife-led maternity services are unlikely to be restored in Honiton. References were made to staffing difficulties and also safety issues in case of difficulties during birth.

### **Seaton care home graded 'Outstanding' by Care Quality Commission**

The Check House in Seaton has been rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. I have written to Robin Cannon of Cannon Homes to congratulate him and his staff.

### **NHS Support worker jobs available now in Sidmouth, Seaton and Axminster**

Richard Anderson, the Health and Social Care Community Services Manager for Sidmouth, Axminster and Seaton, has asked me to publicise the fact that NHS Support Worker jobs are available now in the three towns. Good rates of pay, pension etc. Ring Julia Blake on 07592 579919.