



**Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting 2019  
held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Present**

**In the Chair**

Cllr Ken Beer

**Councillors**

Cllr. D Ledger Cllr S Read, Cllr. J Rowland, Cllr J Russell,  
Cllr. M Shaw

**In attendance:**

15 Members of the Community  
Committee Secretary

**19/TM/01 Welcome and report from the Town Mayor / Chairman: Cllr. K Beer**

Cllr. Ken Beer welcomed all attending the meeting and provided an update as follows:

- The Devon Air Ambulance Night Time Landing Strip had been installed and was now in operation. The Town Council would be responsible for this going forward.
- Retained Seaton Primary Schools' swimming pool with the help of East Devon District Council for the public to use during the summer months.
- Better signage in town for the markets etc.
- The Town Council was continuing with the Seafront Enhancement Scheme.
- Have resurrected the Promote Seaton group which consists of local people, businesses, volunteers and traders to come up with ideas to increase trade in the town.
- Spent time with traders to create a Cultural Quarter at the top end of the town as since the Post Office moved footfall had decreased. The Town Council were planning to hold Artisan Markets in Windsor Gardens which might attract people to that part of the town.
- Maintained the Town Council's involvement and planning in Seaton Carnival, Velo Vintage and the CycleFest, along with the Christmas Tree and lights. Helping assist with the Grizzly which was held annually in the town.
- The Town Council were receiving many complaints about dogs allowed on the seafront. Seaton no longer had a Dog Warden and it would be a pity if dogs were banned completely from the seafront as Seaton was being advertised as a Dog Friendly Town.
- The Town Council were striving to keep the town clean and tidy, but it might involve getting a contractor to do the work or asking for volunteers who would be interested in helping.
- Finances – last year the Council stayed within its budget. This year the budget has been increased by 1.9% as the amount the Town Council receives from Central Government and the District Council had been drastically reduced and the Council was having to pay most of the costs incurred for running services in the town.

- The Town Council lost its Clerk at the end of March this year. This has had a huge impact on the remaining staff who were having to cover the Clerks workload as well as their own. The Council has employed a locum clerk for two days a week to help until a new Clerk is in place.

**19/TM/02 Presentation by Mr James Chubb, Countryside Team Leader, EDDC**  
Cllr Ken Beer announced that unfortunately James Chubb, who was going to give this presentation, was stuck in road traffic on the A30 and would not make the meeting.

**19/TM/03 Minutes of the Town Meeting 2018**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2018 were agreed.

**19/TM/04 Reports from Seaton Town Council Committees**

**Cllr H Sanham: Chairman Community & Open Spaces Committee**

Cllr Ken Beer announced that Cllr Sanham had sent her apologies for this meeting. Cllr Beer said that regular meetings were held of the Community and Open Spaces Committee and it was one of the main committees of the Council making sure that everything in the town was running smoothly.

**Cllr J Rowland: Promote Seaton**

In the absence of an Events Manager Cllr Rowland had taken over chairing meetings of this group. Meetings were held usually once a month and anyone interested in Seaton was welcome to come along to the meetings. The types of events Promote Seaton were promoting and helping with were the Outdoor Cinema Event to be held in Cliff Field Gardens. During these meetings it would be nice to have ideas come forward for events in the town. The Council were very concerned about the vibrancy of the town centre and would like businesses to come along to the meetings. Since the closure of the post office the footfall in Beer Road and Queen Street had dropped considerably and some planning applications had come in wanting to change the use of retail outlets to residential dwellings which the Council had resisted so far. Cllr Rowland thanked Cllr Ledger and Cllr Read for helping him weed around the town along with the Streetscene Team from East Devon District Council. Cllr Rowland said the Town Council was committed to making improvements to the street furniture, finger posts and signage in the town this year.

**Cllr. S Read: Chairman Planning Committee**

Cllr Read explained that the Planning Committee was an advisory body and could only make recommendations on planning applications to the District Council. The Committee considered all applications and generally raised no objections to them. During the past year the Committee had reviewed 97 applications of which 74 were recommended for approval and 23 applications were recommended not to be approved, the objections being on the grounds of over development, the effects of the proposal on the amenities of neighbouring properties and coastal erosion. Of these 23 applications 7 were approved by the District Council.

**Cllr. M Shaw: Devon County Councillor for Seaton**

Cllr Shaw explained that he had prepared a written report as he represented nine parishes. The County Council spent a large amount of their budget on Social Care,

Education and Children's Services along with Highways. Over the past year Cllr Shaw had been involved in many local issues including Highways, the speed limit on Seaton Down Hill and the resurfacing of the road in Townsend Avenue. There were many concerns raised relating to speeding issues. Another concern which residents raised was the missing section of the cycle route through Seaton Wetlands. Cllr Shaw said he had been pressing hard to get this resolved and the County Council were now in negotiations with the landowners to allow the cycle route to be completed through the Wetlands. There was the question of trying to extend the route through to Axminster. Currently the only funding available was for cycle routes which were helping with congestion in urban areas. These were some of the issues which Cllr Shaw had dealt with during the past year.

#### **Cllr J Rowland: Seaton Hospital**

Cllr Rowland reported that there was a group set up in the town called Seaton Area Health Matters which had been established for just over a year. One of its primary aims was to look at the future of Seaton Hospital. Since the loss of the hospital beds there were concerns about the long term future of the hospital as 40% of the space there was now empty. Over fifty clinics still operate from the hospital and the Care at Home was based at the hospital. The group had been working on a business plan over the last few months and the final version had been sent to the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Royal Devon and Exeter Trust and NHS Property Services. A meeting had been scheduled to be held with representatives from these groups to discuss the business plan. The group were trying to make the hospital into a Health and Wellbeing Hub. The groups aim was to maintain the existing clinics running there, try and attract more clinics, but also have more voluntary services operating from the hospital so it would be a centre for the community. Legally the hospital was owned by NHS Property Services and they needed convincing that the business plan was sound.

#### **Cllr K Beer: Finance and General Purposes Committee**

Cllr Beer reported that this committee met once a month to look at the spending of the Council to ensure the finances were in order. The committee ensures that any money the Council spends was spent correctly and this was one of the main priorities of any Council.

#### **19/TM/05 Police Report from PC Adam Speers**

Unfortunately the Police were unable to attend the meeting, but PC Adam Speers had sent in a report. Cllr Beer reported the breakdown of the crime figures as follows:

269 crimes for the year which were nine more than the year before.

Criminal damage and Public Order offences were down. The shop lifting figures were up which was due to one male shop lifting from several shops over the Christmas period. Sexual offences were up, but this was sorted in August as a male had been sent to prison. The police were continuing to warn the public about scams where people were being asked to transfer money out of their bank accounts to unknown people. The banks were wise to this and were taken measures to prevent this from happening. Scam talks were held in the town along with internet safety talks in Seaton Library. Local events which were organised in the town were well run which was a help to the police and much appreciated.

PC Speers again thanked all residents and shop owners in the town centre in the aftermath of the Clarence fire in December for the support they given to the residents who were made homeless.

#### **19/TM/06 Grant Recipients 2018/19**

Cllr Beer reported that every year the Town Council sets money aside to be given out as grants to various organisations in the town. Some of these recipients had come along to the meeting to say what they had done with the grant or what they intended to do with it.

#### **Seaton & District Garden Club**

The Chairman of the Seaton & District Garden Club thanked the Council for the grant they received of £240. The flower bed at the top of Harepath Road was starting to take shape and the club had arranged for the grass to be cut. It was hoped that a water butt would be installed shortly which would be a great help. There were volunteers who, each month, came and weeded the bed and kept it neat and tidy. Some of the plants were in situ and the volunteers keep adding plants to the bed. The bed was due to be judged sometime in July, so the grant had been used for buying new plants, cutting the grass and maintaining the health and growth of the plants.

#### **Seaton & District Twinning Association**

The Association received a grant of £500 which they were very grateful for. They had a visit of about forty eight people from Thury Harcourt planned for July and they were spending about £3,500 on entertaining the visitors. Most of this money had been raised by the association themselves. In the past they have visited the Seaton Jurassic Centre and they were aware of the CycleFest which was taking place over the same weekend as the Thury Harcourt visit. The visitors would have a choice of whether to stay in Seaton and watch the racing or be taken elsewhere locally.

#### **Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring & Ride Service**

Shirley Williams from Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring & Ride Service thanked the Council for their grant of £1,000. People who are eligible to use this service include the elderly, people with disabilities and people living in isolated areas with no other transport facilities. The minibus is wheelchair accessible and the driver picks up passengers from their homes and takes them into town for shopping or to use local services. A different area is covered each day. The grant would go towards the maintenance of their vehicles and the needs of the drivers.

#### **Seaton Library**

Seaton Library ran Teen Sessions which the Town Council had supported for over ten years. For two hours a week the library is dedicated to teenagers only. They can use the space as they wish. They can participate in activities or just meet friends. The library staff and volunteers provide this safe environment and help them with whatever they want to do. The library feels these sessions make a difference to young peoples lives. They cover a wide range of activities and workshops. The grant given by the Town Council would help continue this work. It had been used to buy refreshments, food ingredients and art and craft materials. Over the past year several local artists had shared their skills and sessions including a calligraphy workshop and cake decorating. These sessions had been of a huge benefit and Seaton Library were very grateful for the support they had received from the Town Council over the past ten years.

### **HALFF (Health & Local Foods for Families)**

HALFF thanked the Town Council for the support they had given to them. They teach people how to cook for good health. The people who attended these sessions love it and could use the skills they learnt at these sessions. The Town Council had helped HALFF enormously by letting them use the facilities at Marshlands to run cookery demonstrations twice a month. HALFF do not charge for these and must raise the money themselves.

### **Seaton Parkrun**

Tony Smith from Seaton Parkrun thanked the council for the grant which was given to them within the last year to cover the ongoing costs of putting on the events. The Town Council had help set up the parkrun which started in November 2016. The runs start on the Esplanade at Fisherman's Gap at 9.00am on a Saturday. It is a free event and has grown in numbers since it first started and attracts people from out of the local area. The grant is used to cover ongoing costs such as equipment. The parkrun receives several referrals from local GP surgeries which prescribe them from both a physical and mental perspective.

### **TRIP Community Transport**

Sharon Thorne, Deputy Manager of TRIP thanked the Council for their grant and explained that even though TRIP was based in Honiton they do cover Seaton with their Voluntary Car Service which supports people getting to and from medical appointments. They also have a shop in Honiton which sells disability aids which is a non profit outlet. They were very grateful to the Council for the help and support which they gave TRIP and thanked the Council for this.

### **19/TM/07 Seaton Pool Presentation**

Cllr Beer presented a cheque to Seaton Primary School to help towards keeping their pool open for use during the summer. The primary school thanked the Town Council for their grant.

### **19/TM//08 Town Cryer Handover**

Cllr Beer said that unfortunately the new Town Cryer was unable to attend the meeting, but as soon as they could start the Council would like them to promote Seaton as much as possible.

### **19/TM/09 Public Forum: Question & Answer Session**

Question: Axe Yacht Club has a webcam showing the entrance to Seaton, but not to its best advantage. Could the Town Council investigate having a webcam on the other side of Axmouth Bridge showing the whole of the seafront and possibly Seaton Wetlands which are the best views of the town so as to encourage visitors to the area as we need something better than what is there now?

Answer: Comments have been made by visitors that Seaton has the best seafront in Devon as it is flat, and the views are beautiful, and more should be made of this. Having a webcam on the other side of Axmouth Bridge is a good idea.

Question: Is there nothing that can be done about the seagulls sitting on the roof of the old Post Office building? The pavement by the Post Office is covered in seagull mess and is terrible. There is no deterrent to stop the seagulls from sitting on the roof.

Answer: Numerous letters have been written to the owners of the building, but as a Town Council we cannot force the owners to do anything to prevent the seagulls from going onto the roof.

Question: Could the Town Council say what they are doing about replacing the Dog Warden who recently left? Dogs have been allowed to go along East Walk and if there are bye laws preventing this they should be enforced. Seaton needs a Dog Warden particularly as it is now coming into the summer season.

Answer: Cllr Beer said the Town Council was getting complaints about dog fouling and it is one of the top priorities on the Councils Personnel Committee agenda along with recruiting a new Town Clerk. The Council was looking to appoint a new Dog Warden, but we were the only town in East Devon with a Dog Warden.

Cllr Rowland said he appreciated the work which the Dog Warden did. They saw their job as trying to educate people and not just to issue them with a fine. From comments posted on social media people thought the Dog Warden was on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Dog Warden was only contracted to work ten hours per week. The Council appreciated that this was an issue and lately there had been a problem with the dog bins not being emptied which was a contractual issue. In the future if the public notice any dog bins which needed emptying, they could report this online on the East Devon District Councils website. Cllr Beer added that if people had not got access to the internet, they could phone the Town Council and report it.

Question: Town Council discussed boards which would help in telling people they should not be walking their dogs in the area between East Walk and Fisherman's Gap between 1<sup>st</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> September. Has the Town Council made any progress with this at all?

Answer: Cllr Beer replied that he was not sure how this was progressing but thought that it was an excellent idea as if people continued to walk their dogs in that area during the summer months there would come a time when dogs were completely banned from the seafront which the Town Council did not want as they were trying to promote Seaton as a Dog Friendly Town.

Cllr Beer reminded people that Council meetings were open to the public and they were most welcome to attend any meeting. There was a Public Question Time at the start of meetings where members of the public could raise any matters with the Council.

Brian Palmer thanked HALFF (Health & Local Foods for Families) for the cooking demonstrations they ran at Marshlands. He had learnt so much from the sessions and so had other people who attended them. His cooking skills had improved.

Brian urged anyone who was interested in healthy cooking to attend these demonstrations.

Cllr Ken Beer called the meeting to a close and thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 19.58.

Chairman

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Date:

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# Chairman's Annual Report

## 2020-2021

This year has been most difficult because of Covid-19 and the need to meet remotely.

**Covid-19:** This did show the coming together of the great community of Seaton's people and organisations to help the vulnerable people to shop and obtain services and products through the assistance of volunteers. I would particularly like to thank Ben Tucker and Andrew Gwyn Davies for their organisational abilities and all the volunteers who gave up countless hours to co-ordinate and assist those in need. This project that started in response to the pandemic, has now developed into a community interest company called Re:Store. Food supplies to the needy have been maintained during this period with the help of Tesco and the Cooperative stores.

**Film Shows:** to thank the volunteers, Seaton Town Council sponsored a film show on Cliff Field Gardens for them and their families.

**Repainting Seaton:** Seaton Town Council has sponsored the repainting of many shop premises to brighten up the town.

**Seafront Enhancement Project:** the planning permission for the project expired in late 2020 and the project is being reassessed by STC and EDDC together.

**Jurassic Centre/TIC:** Seaton Town Council have been advised that Devon Wildlife Trust will not be renewing the contract to run these premises and EDDC are reviewing the situation as regards Seaton Jurassic. Seaton Town Council are looking at options for the provision of tourist information services going forward.

**Events:** most events were cancelled because of Covid-19 and this included CycleFest, the Grizzly Run, the town's carnival and Christmas procession, but more festive lights were erected to brighten the town and a festive film of the Christmas preparations was but is hoping to reopen later this year.

Seaton Tramway have continued to be a major attraction for visitors to Seaton and I thank them for their continued work.

**Businesses:** sadly, many businesses were affected by the lock downs but at present there appear to be some new shops opening and the cultural centre is an attractive part of the town for visitors and locals.

**New Councillors:** during this year we had three resignations due to pressure of work in other council roles and businesses. However, we were lucky to recruit four new councillors which include local business owners, professionals and retired residents.

**Promote Seaton:** the town is striving to become Coach Friendly to attract more tourists and the Council's officers provide administrative support to Promote Seaton. The Council funded an advertisement in Coach UK Magazine to encourage coach operators to visit, boosting the local economy.

**Outdoor Gym:** Seaton Town Council enjoyed working in partnership with EDDC by funding a new outdoor gym at Seafeld Gardens.

**New website:** Seaton Town Council launched its new website, providing both important information on the Council's activities and a platform to showcase what the town has to offer.

**Town maintenance:** as always, the Council's staff strive to keep the town's assets in good repair and attractive for both residents and visitors and, in the last year, this has included the start of a programme of replacing picnic benches with recyclable plastic ones, thereby reducing future maintenance costs and increasing sustainability, rebuilding the seafront planter (owned by DCC) and funding the town's floral displays. The painting of the remaining lampposts (also owned by DCC) is scheduled for May.

**Young people:** the Council has provided football posts at Elizabeth Road and has just launched Streetbase Seaton which through will work with Youth Genesis to engage with the town's youngsters

**Seaton Art Trail:** this engagement with local artists started with the art boards on Marshlands and will be developed further in 2021/22 with original art and other images being developed across the town by local artists.

**Community Grants:** various grants have been awarded under the Council's community grants scheme.

**Cllr Ken Beer**

**Mayor & Chairman  
Seaton Town Council**

Outgoing

## County Councillor's Annual Report 2020-21

### **The pandemic**

This year has been one like no other because of the pandemic. We have been very lucky that our infection rates have been consistently lower than in the rest of the country. Nevertheless we have suffered repeated care home outbreaks, with the deaths of at least 8 residents in one Seaton home and a care worker in another. There are still outbreaks in local homes, despite residents being vaccinated. There have also been community cases from time to time, but I am not aware of any deaths.

I joined the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee early last year, and together with some other members raised issues including

- (1) the urgent need for a lockdown in March 2020, when the Government was prevaricating,
- (2) the need for local Public Health to be involved in contact tracing, and
- (3) the need to keep hospital patients from being sent to care homes.

I advocated using community hospital wards for Covid-secure hospital care, supporting the proposal by Cllr Jack Rowland, chair of Seaton Area Health Matters, that our hospital could be used.

I also pressed for free school meals to be continued and, when this was agreed, supported the successful efforts by Seaton community group, Re:store Axe Valley, to distribute Christmas parcels to children from schools across the area.

### **Future of Seaton Community Hospital**

I am now pressing for a new Devon NHS Plan to anticipate future waves or new pandemics, including a plan to fully use our community hospitals. I welcome the use of Seaton Hospital - previously over a third empty - as a vaccination centre, but will press for a long-term plan to fully use the hospital, after NHS Property Services, which owns the hospital, rejected Seaton Area Health Matters' proposals.

On Health Scrutiny, I have played a major role in opposing the closure of Teignmouth Community Hospital, finally ensuring that the proposal was referred to the Secretary of State (which in 2017 the Committee refused to do for Seaton and Honiton).

### **Seaton and Colyton Traffic Group and the state of our roads**

I have continued to chair this group throughout the year and, although it is an uphill struggle, we have had some successes in improving the worst rural roads. In several cases, however, the refurbishment of the ford at Farway, Highways have simply said that funding is not available. Underfunding is a key problem, but also the rules that restrict which potholes contractors repair, leading often to one being fixed while nearby holes are untouched.

### **Stop Line Way cycling and walking route**

After a long period of pressure on my part, the County applied for a Compulsory Purchase Order for the land needed to complete the missing section in Seaton Wetlands. The landowners have objected to the CPO so this will likely go to an Inspector with a decision later in the year. Funding to complete the section is fully budgeted. However the remainder of the route, from Colyford to Axminster, has been dropped by DCC, against my protests. I shall continue to fight to put it back in the programme.

### **Traffic calming and 20 mph limits**

The proposals of a DCC working group, which I contributed to, to make it easier to get 20 mph zones in town and village centres, have been accepted in principle, subject to a trial in Newton Abbott, which was delayed when the pandemic hit. I have encouraged interested parishes to put themselves on a Highways waiting list for 20 mph zones, and Seaton, Colyton, Beer and Offwell have done this.

### **Seaton Seafront Enhancement**

I allocated substantial funding towards Phase 1 of this much-needed project and was involved in lengthy negotiations for Highways approval. I was therefore very disappointed that, due to an error, the planning permission lapsed. I have pressed strongly for the Town Council to secure a new permission and supported Jack Rowland's efforts to obtain EDDC support. Once these are secured I will look for any support possible from DCC.

### **A35 in Wilmington and Offwell**

I have continued to work with the two parishes and the A35 Action Group to get Highways England's scheme, which includes speed calming, average speed cameras and crossings in Wilmington, approved and underway. As ever, this is proving a very slow and frustrating process, but it appears that progress is being made.

### **Local projects funded by the locality budget**

In 2020-21 these have included Re:store Axe Valley, the installation of a defibrillator at Northleigh Village Hall, new noticeboards and support for the play park at Offwell, the Re-Store Christmas scheme, road-mending material for Branscombe, support for Colyton Caterpillars, repairs to a wall and steps in Beer, and TRIP community transport.

**EDDC Councillor report for Seaton Town Council Annual Town meeting on 13  
May 2021**

**Report produced by Jack Rowland on 9 May 2021**

**Seaton specific subjects that I am involved with**

**Seafront Enhancement Scheme**

In order to resuscitate the scheme where the stumbling block has always been the necessary funding I have been working with EDDC Cabinet colleagues, EDDC Officers and the local MP's.

This work is in connection with making a bid under the Central Government Levelling Up where the prospectus was issued in late March. Any bids require the written support of the relevant MP at the time of submission and the first bid target date is 18 June. We have agreed tactically that the first bid will be submitted from Exmouth with the support of the MP, Simon Jupp. An Axe Valley bid that will incorporate the Seaton scheme will be submitted in the second round of bids that will open later this year and will require the support of MP Neil Parish who has verbally indicated that he would support the bid.

However, for such a bid to have any chance of success it really needs to have an approved planning application to underpin the bid and demonstrate that the project is "shovel ready". In view of my opinion and the information given I urge Seaton Town Council to put an item on a Council agenda as soon as possible to consider resubmitting the planning application to mirror the expired approval.

**Seaton Hospital**

In my role as Chair of Seaton Area Health Matters (SAHM) and an EDDC Cabinet member I continue to fight to secure the future of the hospital. I am still having discussions with NHS Property Services who are legally the owners of the site.

Many readers will recall that a business plan was submitted by SAHM in June 2019 where SAHM, via the setting up of a CIC, would purchase the hospital via EDDC taking out a Public Works Loan and the CIC becoming the legal owners and being responsible for making the loan repayments to EDDC to enable them to meet the PWL obligation. For SAHM to have the funds to meet the repayments involved having the existing NHS services as an anchor tenant plus concluding the negotiations with a third party dementia care service that had progressed at the time as another anchor tenant. The remaining space would then be available for use by community based health and wellbeing related activities.

Unfortunately, the EDDC Cabinet of the time, in January 2020, did not vote in favour of the recommendation to take out the PWL. However, as I am now a Cabinet member I am revisiting this possibility, hence my ongoing conversations with NHS Property Services at the moment.

## District wide subjects

### Business support

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the associated lock downs and restrictions over the past year EDDC, by the end of this month, will have paid out £80m in various support grants where the Government has supplied the funds, but relied on Local Government to set up the systems and administer the payments. Some of the grants have been of a discretionary nature, albeit still within rules governing the types of business etc, and I have been a member of the grant panel in view of my finance portfolio responsibilities.

### EDDC Partnership Administration

The current administration, since last June, is formed of a partnership of Councillors:

- 12 East Devon Alliance (EDA)
- 7 Liberal Democrats
- 7 Independents
- 2 Greens

A total of 28 Cllrs from the total of 60. The remaining 32 is made up of 21 Conservatives, 10 Independents and 1 vacancy.

Since last June the administration have achieved the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Despite the financial challenges produced as a result of Covid 19 that affected both income and expenditure a balanced budget was produced for 2021/22 although challenges lie ahead for future budget years.
- Withdrew from the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) and started work on a new Local Plan that has undergone public consultation.
- Supported Leisure East Devon (LED) financially to the tune of £1.3m to the end of the 2020/21 financial year. Of the £1.3m EDDC has received £299k from Central Government support, but of this £90k can be used to offset the £1.3m and the remaining £209k has to be used towards the re-opening costs for April to June this year where EDDC will be filling the expected gap above that amount. A LED Monitoring Forum has been set up to meet monthly and a strategic review of LED services looking at future provision is also underway.
- The climate emergency has resulted in a strategy and action plan to meet the carbon neutral targets.
- A poverty action plan is also nearing completion where the issues confronting the district have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Exploring the options to be able to build more council housing in the district despite the current constraints that exist due to the right to buy existing stock and how the proceeds can be used.

Jack Rowland

EDDC Councillor – Seaton Ward

Portfolio Holder – Finance [JRowland@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:JRowland@eastdevon.gov.uk)

## **Annual Report – Cllr Marcus Hartnell EDDC Ward Member for Seaton**

The past year has been extremely difficult and testing for everyone because of Covid-19. We have all adapted to working differently, and I believe local councils have adjusted well to working remotely and adapting to what have been unprecedented and tough restrictions.

Officers at East Devon District Council have been extremely quick and agile in responding to the pandemic, administering grants and payments quickly and efficiently to support businesses and individuals along with keeping services running, such as kerbside waste and recycling.

Significantly, we have made subsidies to Leisure East Devon to continue supporting them as an important provider of leisure facilities in the district. The Council is monitoring this ongoing support as the economy recovers and restrictions ease.

Climate Change is very much a priority for Councillors, and several initiatives are coming forward such as electric car charging points and the installation of energy efficient heat pumps in council owned homes.

At a town level I have been involved with the Seafront Enhancement Project since being elected in 2015, and I have to say progress regarding the Moridunum derelict toilets is frustratingly slow. Along with my fellow ward members I continue to meet with officers and our legal team at EDDC to progress a preferred option for its future, and how that will impact on the wider scheme. There is hope that some funding for the wider scheme may come through via the government levelling up agenda, but at the time of writing there has been no concrete decision on this.

After putting pressure on the former owners of the Hook & Parrot to improve or sell it, I am really pleased to see a planning application come forward to provide a new restaurant and apartments, which will greatly enhance this part of the seafront.

The Water bottle Refill station along the seafront is to be installed very soon (delivery of the unit was delayed) and I am extremely pleased that Seaton Town Council have agreed to fund another point from their budget this year.

Following several months of negotiations and delays due to Covid, I am pleased that the modular changing facilities at Seaton Football Club are scheduled to be installed in July ahead of the season starting in the autumn. These were funded through S106 funding from Bovis Homes.

It is sad news that Devon Wildlife Trust have given notice to stop operating Seaton Jurassic, and this is a blow for our local tourist economy. I shall be pushing to ensure any new arrangements for the centre are dealt with as quickly as possible to avoid the building remaining empty, which would impact negatively to visitors. The Wetlands Link Project has been progressing and the Tram halt at Seaton Wetlands is an important element of this. Further intervention to link Sheep's Marsh with the town are continuing.

I have got involved with Del Haggerty's efforts to make Seaton coach friendly. I've raised concerns about the Coach Park being used by school buses between 9am-3pm which conflicts with encouraging tourist coaches – sometimes there are only a few bays left during these hours. The officer for Car Parks at EDDC will be contacting the Town Council shortly to discuss the coach park and the potential for Motorhome parking in Seaton as the legal order will need to be altered if we want to make changes.

A lot of work has continued at East Devon throughout the pandemic, and I believe we have found some better ways to work as Councillors, particularly through remote meetings where we can reduce our own carbon footprint by not driving to Honiton for meetings and save taxpayers money by reducing the amount paid to councillors for travel costs. I am looking forward to meeting face-to-face again, but I think Zoom is here to stay!