

The Parish Council continues to work to ensure the village operates correctly, and keeps a tight control on its spending. This year will be financially tighter than normal, as we have to absorb the increase in employers' national insurance levy along with all of the other increasing expenses. We try to hold EDDC, Devon County Council and Devon Highways to account for its planning decisions, the state of the roads, blocked drains and a myriad of other things. However, it is often like wading through treacle, and we can only thank our superb Council Clerk for the hard work she puts in supporting the Council to achieve goals and action solutions. If you have any questions or queries concerning Parish Council matters, please contact the Clerk, by email, by post at the Mariners Hall, or please feel free to come a Council meeting and have your say in person. We look forward to seeing you.

Several residents have asked about the ongoing saga of the transfer of assets. Having rejected the original proposals due to the extreme financial burden, it would have placed on the village of £1,046,000.00 in the first 10 years and increasing with the rate of inflation every 10 years after that, the Parish Council aided by local residents on an asset transfer working group, formulated an asset transfer plan that was affordable, self-funding and most importantly transparent.

In February 2024, the required Expression of Interest forms was sent to EDDC along with a covering letter outlining many pertinent questions, which should have been asked by the previous Parish Council.

On the 17th June 2024 we watched with dismay at an EDDC zoom meeting, where the Beer Expression of Interest into the transfer of assets proposal was only partially and very poorly discussed by the members of the EDDC Asset Management Forum. It was evident at this meeting that 50 to 60% of the participants had little idea what they were discussing, or why. It was clear that a number of the District Councillors involved had minimal understanding of the transfer of assets process or had not taken the time to read and understand both the EDDC documentation and the previous proposals relating to this.

In December 2024, some 10 and a half months after EDDC had received the Expression of Interest, they finally replied inviting the Parish Council to submit a business case concerning the transfer of assets. EDDC however had failed to answer **ANY** of the pertinent questions asked in the February 2024 letter, answers of which are needed to begin to formulate the business plan.

At the January 2025 Parish Council meeting, there was significant concern and dismay at the lack of response from EDDC, and it was decided to write to EDDC requiring that both these questions and a further 14 questions be answered by early March 2025.

Towards the end of January 2025, we received a response from the person who is "in charge" of asset transfer at EDDC as follows: ***Most of the questions in this relate to things that I am unable to answer so its been passed elsewhere in the Council. We will endeavour to have a response by 5th March.***

So, after a year of having a list of questions, the answers of which are needed to draw up a fully costed and transparent business plan, the person in charge and a full-time paid officer of EDDC is only now trying to find the answers. Bearing in mind that most of these questions should have been asked and answers provided in the June 2024 Zoom meeting, after all they had them on the Expression of Interest letter, and it is not as if they suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

So once again we wait on EDDC, after all this process started in 2017 and there have been 13 versions of the original scheme made and changed by EDDC, before the Parish Council rejected it in favour of an affordable scheme. Surely, due diligence on the part of EDDC would have asked and answered many of these questions many times in the past. We shall now, with anticipation, await the long overdue

answers to the posed questions, to ensure that we can with full transparency, move forward in the best interests of both the village and its residents.

Cllr Tim Stevens, Vice Chairman, Beer Parish Council