District Councillor's Report October 2026

1- I was contacted by an elderly and disabled resident who lives in a social housing property in Branscombe last month to convey her distress about leaking pipes under her kitchen sink which was causing flooding and which meant she was unable to launder her clothes and bedding. This situation had been reportedly occurring for two-years, and she was at her wits end. I contacted Housing as asked for this matter to be treated as an urgent request for repair. I'm pleased to report that Housing immediately commissioned an investigation and the tenant's pipework has been repaired by EDDC's housing contractor. The tenant is also on the list for a full kitchen renovation next year. I commend officers for their rapid response to the tenant's situation.

2- The overgrown Yew trees in the Beer closed cemetery have been either cut down (dead trees) or pollarded (existing live trees). This makes the whole area more attractive and gives an excellent visual sighting of the Chapel of Rest – I am a member of that working group as we want to see the CoR re-established as a building of historic interest and use.

3- Regarding the kayaks on Beer beach. This has aroused some comments from the community. The EDDC beach manager reports as follows: *a number of notices have been placed on unregistered canoes, kayaks and sit on tops at Beer. There were a frankly shocking number of unregistered craft (in the region of 50) and as most of you will know this has been a long time in process.*

It has to be dealt with because to ignore it would be unfair on those who have paid to register properly, but I am cautious that the sheer scale of the issue and the length of time its previously persisted unaddressed may give rise to complaints and/or negative comments on social media so I wanted you all to be forewarned

The way this process works is

1) unregistered craft have a notice in a sticky envelope affixed warning the owner that the craft needs to be registered and if it is not, it is at risk of being removed… this is what we've issued today.

2) After two weeks have elapsed any craft that remain on the beach and unregistered are issued with a disposal notice saying that if they are not registered or removed, they will be disposed of… these will be issued on October 16th

3) at least four weeks after that (exact date depending on both weather and staff capacity) any unregistered craft that remain are removed to a depot where they are kept for another two weeks before being disposed of. We are not legally obligated to keep them for this third period, but it helps reduce issues.

In terms of disposal, we can either sell them after fairly establishing price, give them away for example to a local scout group or similar, or send them for plastic recycling via the waste streams (or in the case of any that are fibre glass pay for their specialist

removal), the exact method and timescale of disposal will be determined when we get to that point.
I would also note that the annual storage fee for a kayak on our beaches is currently an extremely reasonable £33.48 per annum (which equates to about 65p a day), anyone contacting any of you about this can be directed here for more information *Boat, kayak and winch registration - East Devon*

4- I am seeking an informal meeting with senior housing officers in EDDC regarding the Hillside social housing property in Branscombe and the long-voided properties in Underleys, Beer. I am very much against the sale of social housing properties through auction or estate agents: the only mitigation is if the cost of repair or renovation is over a guideline figure of 50k per property as laid down by various councils, including EDDC, with responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of social housing. It is important for me to know in what way any social housing property is considered unviable for repair and renovation. In my duty of care to you I work on the principles of TACT – Trust, Accountability, Communication and Transparency. With these principles in mind, I have requested an informal meeting with senior housing staff in EDDC so I can get a grip on what solutions can be found to ensure social housing stock is not diminished. This is important because otherwise young people will be driven out of the villages due to cost of either obtaining a mortgage or exorbitant and insecure private lets or properties being used as Airbnb's. It also affects people wishing to downside such as elders and harms the vibrancy of our communities. We need young working families to have the ability to live and work in their local communities. A suitable portfolio of social houses is key to ensuring our villages remain as thriving, inclusive communities with a range of different age groups. From residents' enquiries I am acutely aware of the need for sufficient social housing properties to be in place to meet the need.
5- The parish council and I have written to Streetscene to request weed and overgrowth removal in the children's playground in Underleys. I hope to be able to report positively on this matter by the time of November's DC report.

Best wishes,

John

District Councillor John Heath