

## West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) Annual Report 2023

Hello and thank you for attending this annual village meeting. I firstly want to say a big thank you to all who supported me in the recent council election. I am proud and grateful to have another 4 years to be your representative on the borough council and I will endeavor to do the best for all our community.

WDBC have been busy recovering from the covid pandemic. We have also had to deal with a housing crisis and a cost of living crisis.

Cost of living support has been put in place for those residents who are struggling with financial issues. We have increased council tax support grants and have advisors and a vulnerability officer who can assist. There is a household support grant available and other grants, which we can direct you to.

The housing crisis is a much more complex situation and will take the national government to change some of the legislation and guidelines around where and what is built. In our area there is a real shortage of affordable to buy or rent homes. I have asked for a Housing Need survey in this area so we can get an accurate picture of what housing is required. This will take place in the Summer. So please if you know anyone struggling to find a home, is in unaffordable rental property or who has had to move away because of lack of housing, get them to complete the form. I am trying to make the case for a small development of affordable homes but cannot do so if there's no evidence of local need.

WDBC have worked hard to get the grant funding for the new Okehampton Parkway station. A grant of £13.4 million was made for a transport hub to include provision for active travel routes. The Parkway station will make rail travel from this area so much more accessible. It will include car and bicycle parking.

I had already set up a committee to promote active travel in our area, The Beacon Path. We have successfully raised enough funding for a feasibility study and have now had the first draft of this study. The committee nee. to make a few amendments and then it will go onto our website. I hope everyone can see it and make suggestions and comments. If we can present an already completed plan we will have a good chance to get an active travel route in the area.

<https://beaconpathactivetravelroute.godaddysites.com>

Another local project I have been involved with is the Save South Zeal Stores and Post office campaign. We have registered with the Plunkett Foundation which supports community owned businesses and with the Financial Conduct Authority as a Community Benefit Society. We are currently writing a business plan and will be surveying the local area to gauge how much we can raise through a community share issue. There are grants available that will double

what we can raise, so it is well worth investing a little, £25 is the minimum amount, to keep the shop and post office going. I will continue to update the PC as we progress.

The St Marys project has also been going well, and if you haven't seen the renovated areas in the church and the garden please go for a look around. I am especially pleased to have been able to create the community fruit and herb garden behind the church. There was much help with digging and planting, we held a community planting day last June followed by a picnic which was great fun. There continues to be ongoing maintenance from a small team of dedicated volunteers, if you have a spare hour or two volunteers are always in demand.

I have joined the Police community liaison group to discuss issues we have locally, particularly antisocial behavior and will continue to attend this group.

On WDBC I am hoping to be chosen as lead member for the Natural Environment, I held this post last year and would like to continue the projects started then.

My contact details are [cllr.lynn.daniel@westdevon.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.lynn.daniel@westdevon.gov.uk) if you need to contact me or call at my door, Tudor Cottage Sticklepath.

Cllr Lynn Daniel May 2023