



Issue 4 of 7

Your Village

Your Say

6th May

In this fourth newsletter leading up to the Community Consultation Day, the focus is on the **Natural Environment**. Five of the twelve core land-use planning principles in the National Policy Planning Framework ('NPPF') relate to the natural environment because sustainable development includes *"moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature"*.

West Devon Borough Council also recognise, in their Green Infrastructure Framework, that *"planning for green infrastructure is as important as planning for grey infrastructure such as roads and new houses. ...preventing further fragmentation and decline in habitats and species ensuring a good quality of life for future generations."*

You told us that...

- you want to **preserve** Exbourne's rural character, tranquillity, and wildlife;
- you want to **improve** the preservation of green spaces, biodiversity, and the impact of street lighting; and
- to **achieve your vision for Exbourne** you want the Neighbourhood Plan to preserve green spaces and the heart of the village and encourage low carbon building.

EXBOURNE'S LANDSCAPE

Exbourne's rural character is that of a typical Devon "*pastoral farmland settlement surrounded by rolling hills*". The parish is farmed by both conventional and organic methods. Some farms receive funding under countryside stewardship schemes that help protect the environment.

The Devon Landscape Character Assessment ('DLCA') describes the landscape as having: "*rounded hills covered in hedged fields; valleys where rivers meander along their tree-lined courses; a strong perception of time-depth, with the landscape reflecting thousands of years of human history from the Neolithic to the present day, a rich tapestry of medieval features, including churches, villages, farms, field boundaries and narrow lanes*". Devon County Council seeks to preserve this character during any development.

The parish is also classified within two nationally designated Landscape Character Areas - '**The Culm**' and '**Dartmoor**'. This is because areas of culm grassland exist in Exbourne and the river and stream corridors connect the parish to Dartmoor. In addition, its landscape is influenced by historic human activity reflected in the remnants of medieval hedging, strip farming, crop marks and barrows found in the parish.

We'd like to know... *Which landscape features do you value most and how can we ensure new development is appropriate to Exbourne's landscape character in terms of design, quality and visual appearance?*

EXBOURNE'S WILDLIFE

Exbourne's biodiversity is rich and we are home to some threatened species and habitats. The parish has five habitats prioritized for conservation under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan ('BAP'). These are its: **Traditional Orchards** such as those behind the Red Lion and at Coombe House opposite the Village Hall, **The Culm** rush pasture near

the Hole Brook, **Mixed Deciduous Woodlands** located around the parish, its **Hedgerows** and the **Neutral Grassland** found in the open spaces in the centre of the village.

Twenty-one of the animal species recorded by parishioners from trees, gardens, hedgerows, fields and open spaces in the parish are threatened species targeted for conservation under BAP. These are the common bullfinch, starling, cuckoo, song thrush, house sparrow, tree sparrow, marsh tit, willow tit, grasshopper warbler, wood warbler, skylark, linnet, yellow wagtail, reed bunting, yellowhammer, brown hairstreak butterfly, slow worms, the brown long-eared bat, the otter, hedgehog and the dormouse.

The habitats and food sources of Exbourne's wildlife need conserving to support these priority species. This means having suitable wildlife corridors, open spaces and food sources in any new development whilst maintaining what is currently in the parish.

We'd like to know...*How can we help increase biodiversity? For example, do you support encouraging the use of hedges and fences in new development that will help conserve wildlife and its movement?*

FLOODING

Flood Zones 2 and 3 exist in the parish and sections of the flood plain associated with the Okement River and Hole Brook put parts of the parish at risk of flood. The groundwater within the parish is nitrate vulnerable.

Flood risk is required to be managed for any new development, taking account of flood zones and surface water run-off.

We'd like to know...*Where have you experienced flooding or poor surface water management in Exbourne?*

WATER QUALITY, AIR AND LIGHT POLLUTION

Section 11 of the NPPF focuses on conserving and enhancing the natural environment by *“preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution....”*

The Environment Agency specifies that Exbourne’s **water quality** is at moderate ecological status; based on the objectives of the Water Framework Directive, the Hole Brook is failing with regard to its macrophytes and phytobenthos. The (Middle) River Okement in Exbourne is also at moderate ecological status but is failing with regard to its levels of phosphate, copper and zinc. **The Environment Agency target for these Exbourne water-bodies is to meet Good Ecological Status by 2027. Any development needs to assist in this aim.**

Air quality in Exbourne is currently good. Topography, tree cover, traffic movement and the existence of open spaces all help maintain good air quality and through flow.

Between 1% and 3% of houses in Exbourne are estimated to be subject to levels of Radon above the advisory limit.

Exbourne village generates a limited level of **light pollution** and outer regions of the parish experience some of the darkest skies in the country. “Dark Skies” are valued both by many parishioners and nationally.

We’d like to know...*Do you support reducing the levels of light pollution in Exbourne?*

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR FEEDBACK ON 6TH MAY. If you can’t make it, send comments to the Parish Clerk or preferably via the Neighbourhood Plan website at np.exbournewithjacobstowe.org.uk