

February 2020 Report

Cllr Lindsay MacDougall

I have attended meetings re. the **Towns Fund, Pomparles Bridge travellers, Local Plan Main Modifications and Planning Board**. The January meeting of the Planning Board included another major housing development in Wells at Elms Close. Mendip District Council (MDC) is obliged to pass such developments where the developer would win on appeal. With regard to increasing energy efficiency and providing renewable energy generation, central government has not increased the requirement for solar panels, insulation and so on and we cannot enforce any request for developers to make such provision. Ensuring housing goes to those most in need, by the provision of social housing, is limited by the continued option of right-to-buy which means councils lose money if they build for this purpose, at a time when council budgets continue to be cut year on year. I am informed that comments from the public re. national policy should be addressed to CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) and the professional bodies for house building, eg. RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), who are in a position to lobby central government effectively.

The **Local Plan main Modifications** include a requirement for another 1171 new houses in the Mendip area, ie another 604 per year, due to a change in the formula used by central government to allocate housing numbers.

Our town clerk will be advertising for further places on the **Town Deal Board** imminently, and inquiries and applications should be addressed to economy@mendip.gov.uk

Applications are encouraged from those with experience of large funding bids, professional skills and/or a good knowledge of the needs of our town together with experience of successful engagement in community consultation.

MDC is proposing to plant trees on the green space at **Pomparles Bridge**, once the final vehicle has been evicted, which is in hand.

I can report that the new **Recycle More process** starts for over 50,000 Mendip homes in June-July. Once Recycle More collections start in a location and all households have been sent details and pick-up calendars, these items will be added to weekly recycling:

- Plastic pots, tubs and trays (ie PET categories 4 and 5; category 6 is polystyrene or Styrofoam which is difficult to recycle; 7 is everything else including Vegware, which has to be processed at a special industrial composting facility - see vegware.com).
- Tetra Paks, other beverage cartons
- Batteries, small electrical items

Looking to the end of (most) landfill, building continues of the new £252 million energy-from-waste (**EFW**) plant in **Avonmouth**. The trial twin rubbish skips at recycling sites suggest around 60% of their unrecyclable materials may go Avonmouth along with all rubbish from Somerset's kerbside bins and black sack collections. The EFW plant will power the £65 million co-located plastics reprocessing plant that looks set to take much if not all Somerset plastics.