

After last month's comments on our local devolution, it would now appear that our area of east Devon is not a priority area. This should mean we have a bit longer to come to a fair and proportional decision, we'll see. In the meantime, I am concerned over a potential conflict of interest within our council, when it comes to deciding which of the devolution plans being worked up, to go for. It would seem clear that county and district have strongly differing ideas of how to split up the area and where the relevant responsibilities will fall. This will not be a unique situation to us, and will no doubt be mirrored across the nation, wherever you have cllrs who wear a district and county hat. However, here I'm concerned at the level of pressure which will be brought to bear, especially along party lines, whereas what we need is full impartiality when it comes to voting on this very important change to our local democracy.

Apparently EDDC, along with County, are considering overturning a local ban on the use of glyphosate. This has come about after public complaints concerning overgrown road side verges. As a committed naturalist and beekeeper, I strongly oppose this potential retrograde step. The evidence is clear on the long term hazards associated with this chemical, especially the devastating impact it has on the little seen elements of our wildlife. I am, however, confident that common sense will prevail, and that this request will be dismissed.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to report that a full and frank debate took place at last month's full council regarding the leisure plans for Cranbrook. The proposed allocation of monies to this project are substantial, especially given the pressures all our basic services are under, and I entered the debate with some profound misgivings. However, after some well presented reports and further information, I was left feeling confident that this investment, not just in Cranbrook, but for all our district, will bring major benefits to all of us long into the future.

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