



East Devon Heritage Strategy (2024-2042) Consultation Representation Form

Name of the Plan to which this representation relates: East Devon Heritage Strategy 2024-2042

Please return to East Devon District Council, Planning Policy, Blackdown House, Border Road, Honiton, EX14 1EJ, email to PlanningPolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk by **26th January 2026**.

This form has two parts:

Part A – Personal Details: Needs to be completed only once.

Part B – Your representation(s): Please fill in a separate sheet for each section of the strategy you wish to comment on or provide further comments via an accompanying email/letter when returning your consultation form.

Part A: Personal details

1. Personal details

Full name

Joseph Watson

Are you acting as an agent for another party?

No

Organisation (where relevant)

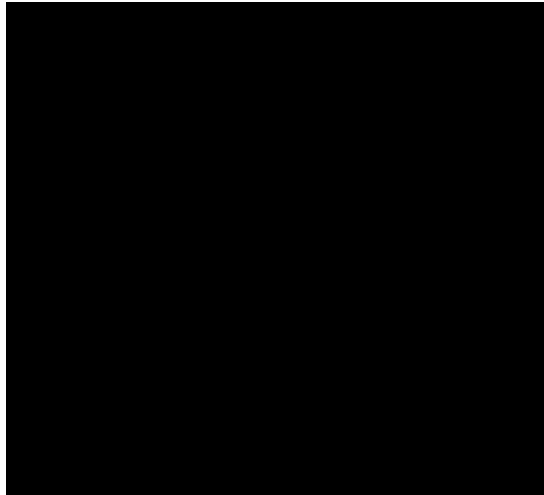
Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

Postcode

Email address



Part B – Representation

Please use the following section to provide us with your response.

2. If your response relates to a specific part of the Heritage Strategy, please tell us which part here (e.g. Section 2, or Paragraph 4.1, or Theme A, or Action C1) *(please refer to the Heritage Strategy consultation site to view a numbered list of actions)*

Section

Paragraph

Theme

Action

3. Please use this box to set out your comments.

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary or please use another form to comment on multiple parts of the strategy)

Please see appended document, EDDCHeritageStrategyConsultation [REDACTED] with responses.

4. If you have any other general comments about the Heritage Strategy, please write your feedback in the box below.

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please see appended document, EDDCHeritageStrategyConsultation [REDACTED] with responses.

East Devon District are looking to increase community engagement with heritage assets across the district. We ran a pilot project in 2019 in East Budleigh to build skills and knowledge amongst volunteers to help manage, protect and enhance our heritage assets.

6.(a) If you or your organisation would like to be contacted in the future with an invite to get involved in the pilot scheme, please indicate below:

Yes, I would like to be involved

My organisation would like to be involved

I would like to be contacted with further information to decide then

My organisation would like further information in the future
(please leave an email address or phone number in the box below)

No, I do not want to be involved.

6.(b) If you would like further information about future engagement to be sent to a different email to the one you have provided above, please leave it here:

For more information on how we use your data – please read the privacy notices at the following links: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/access-to-information/data-protection/privacy-notice> and [engagement-consultation-and-surveys.pdf](#)

PART B – REPRESENTATION

3. SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS

(i) The Jurassic Coast Trust

Section: various

Paragraph: 1.64, 2.45, 2.46, 2.135 plus footnote, Appendix 3 Partners

Theme: various

Action: various

Comment: The Jurassic Coast Trust closed early in 2025. This is not referenced in the context of the strategy, though the Jurassic Coast and the Jurassic Coast Trust are referenced throughout as the most significant heritage asset within EDDC's territory. My understanding is that the responsibilities of the Trust have been passed to Dorset Council's World Heritage Principal Officer (ref. <https://jurassiccoast.org/>). The strategy does not reference who holds responsibility for the ongoing protection and promotion of the Jurassic Coast within East Devon. This presents a risk to EDDC's status in relation to the designating body, UNESCO, and in the ongoing promotion and resourcing of this crucial natural asset and the economic benefits it brings.

Recommendations:

- Amend some of the entries referencing the Jurassic Coast / Jurassic Coast Trust to make it clear that the Trust has now closed.
- Include a clear statement / action relating to the current relationship between EDDC and other stakeholders in relation to the Jurassic Coast's ongoing promotion and protection.
- Consider a greater focus on EDDC's section of the Jurassic Coast as one of the principal drivers of international and national tourism to the region.

(ii) Colyton's status as a town

Section: various

Paragraph: 2.29, 2.156, 2.198, Appendix 2

Theme: various

Action: various

Comment: Please ensure that Colyton's historic status as a town (rather than a village) is acknowledged throughout. It appears variously as a town and village within this document.

Recommendation:

- Consider moving Colyton from the 'Larger Villages' section, para. 2.29 to the subsequent section under Towns, para. 2.30.

- Appendix 2 – for clarity of information, consider moving Colyton to the Towns section, as it appears to be the only town under the section marked “Villages / small towns”.

(iii) Colyton Heritage Centre

Section: Appendix 3: Partners, local history organisations & museums

Paragraph: pg. 85

Theme: various

Action: various

Comment: Please include Colyton Heritage Centre under the list of East Devon Museums and Heritage Centres.

4. GENERAL COMMENTS

There is much to welcome about the refreshed Heritage Strategy 2024-2042 and the strategy adopts a pragmatic approach given the limited resources available to EDDC.

The plan originates from EDDC’s Planning Department, so it is understandable that it focuses on designated assets and the built historic environment. However, it is widely accepted by heritage bodies and relevant cultural entities that heritage is also sustained through living heritage: traditions, events, skills, crafts and shared stories that continue to shape community identity. Living heritage can play a practical role in strengthening town and village centres, supporting local businesses, extending the visitor season, and encouraging stewardship.

To ensure the Strategy responds to emerging pressures and opportunities over the plan period, the three key recommendations below (*Church buildings as community heritage assets; Heritage crafts, skills and craft-as-business; Activating heritage interest and the tourism economy through commemorative focal points*) set out a small number of focused opportunities to create a more holistic strategy, where EDDC’s role would be to enable, convene and broker (rather than to deliver directly), working with communities and relevant partners.

(i) Church buildings as community heritage assets

Section: various

Paragraph: 2.9 and throughout

Theme: B – Positively managing our historic environment

Action: various

Comment: Historic church buildings are often among the most significant heritage assets in East Devon’s towns and villages and frequently hold irreplaceable community histories and act as the largest community gathering space within their contexts.

The strategy does not adequately reflect the risks to these buildings within the plan period. Demographic trends suggest these buildings will face acute pressures relating to maintenance, capacity for upkeep, and long-term viability, with some 5% of churches facing possible closure in the period 2026 to 2030 (ref.

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/survey>).

Unmanaged decline could lead to closure, loss of access, or disposal in ways that reduce public benefit and community connection irretrievably, and impact East Devon's tourism economy.

Recommendations:

- Work with relevant partners including the National Churches Trust, Devon Historic Churches Trust, Church of England (Diocese of Exeter) and other denominational representatives, to develop an early warning and prioritisation approach, supporting better visibility of vulnerable buildings and the likely timescales of risk.
- Support the development of partnership frameworks and community support groups (ref. [Friends of St Andrew's Colyton](#) (FoStA)) for sustainable use, recognising the importance of continued community access and appropriate new or shared uses where needed.
- Provide clear signposting to funding routes, expertise and good practice, and support coordination where this helps prevent avoidable deterioration and loss of heritage value.
- Ensure that consideration of church buildings as heritage assets is appropriately reflected in EDDC's approach to heritage at risk, planning and community wellbeing, noting that the importance of these buildings is often not adequately reflected through the Listing process.

(ii) Heritage crafts, skills and craft-as-business

Section: Various

Paragraph: 1.8, 3.15, 2.196, 2.197

Themes: A and C

Action: Various

Heritage crafts and traditional skills are a distinctive part of East Devon's living heritage and contribute to local character, enterprise, and visitor experience. Many of these crafts are on the Heritage Crafts "at risk" register (ref.

<https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/categories-of-risk/>) with immediate risk to their survival within the plan period. For example, Colyton was featured as a case study in James Fox's book *Craftland: A Journey Through Britain's Lost Arts and Vanishing Trades* (Bodley Head, 2025), with reference to its historic ecosystem of crafts, including oak bark tanning, wainwrighting, bookbinding, and other crafts at risk. Craft ecosystems provide an opportunity to strengthen local economies through interpretation, demonstration, retail, and learning, supporting both community pride and sustainable tourism.

Recommendations:

- Work with partners including the Crafts Council and Heritage Crafts to develop a clearer picture of heritage crafts and skills present within EDDC, including the risks and opportunities associated with sustaining them as viable livelihoods.
- Support place-based pilot activity that improves understanding of craft-as-business and its role in local economies, including low-cost interpretation, trails and coordinated “open” moments that can increase dwell time and local spend.
- Encourage partnerships that connect craftspeople with education, volunteering and learning pathways, where feasible, in order to strengthen visibility and intergenerational transfer of skills.
- Ensure that practical barriers to the sustainability of small craft enterprises are understood and, where possible, reduced through signposting, brokerage and alignment with town centre and economic development priorities.

(iii) Activating heritage interest and the tourism economy through commemorative focal points

Section: Various

Paragraph: 1.27, 1.28, 2.62, 2.181, 2.196, 2.197, 3.9

Themes: A and C

Action: Various

Major historical anniversaries present opportunities to improve understanding of our heritage, build community, and create new economic opportunities. As one example, the **350th anniversary of the Monmouth Rebellion in 2035** falls within the strategy period and presents an opportunity to strengthen public understanding of a nationally significant event and its impacts on rural towns and communities within East Devon, Somerset and Dorset. With early planning, this milestone could support high-quality interpretation, education, and community-led commemoration, and contribute to local economic activity.

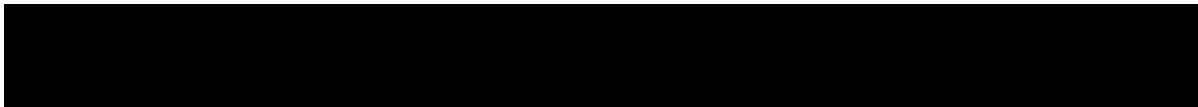
Recommendations:

- In consultation, develop an EDDC calendar of significant heritage anniversaries in the plan period.
- Begin early scoping with partners to identify potential focal locations and themes, and to establish a proportionate coordination approach.
- Encourage the development of interpretive activity that supports learning, public engagement and place identity, such as talks, trails, exhibitions, schools resources and guided walks.
- Support communities to explore how commemorations might also contribute to town centre vitality, local business participation and responsible visitor

engagement, ensuring that historical interpretation remains rigorous and sensitive.

- Where appropriate, support pilot activity in key locations (for example, in towns with strong local narratives and existing community capacity) that can inform wider district learning and replication.

[Joe Watson](#)



20 January 2026

ENDS