

NEWS

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Week's delay to opening

Patients will get their first chance to visit Honiton's £1.2million day centre, which will be named Kings House Day Hospice, on Wednesday, February 17 – a week later than planned.

The delay is as a result of 'building problems', but the extra time will allow for the final checks to be made.

Glynis Atherton, Hospiscare chief executive, said: "There were building problems, so we could not move in all our equipment and we want it to be sparkling clean and perfect when our patients visit."

"We have offered our patients the opportunity to attend day care sessions at either Exeter or Tiverton."

Specialist antimicrobial fabrics have been used throughout the building as they are long lasting and washable.

Glynis added: "The furniture has been designed for very flexible use, the ceilings are high and there are lots of window making the south facing building very light."

"A ground force team of volunteers will be planting the garden in April and Hospiscare will soon be announcing the dates for public open days at Kings House."

The day hospice appeal has now reached £275,000 – £25,000 more than the original target.

New group 'a breath of fresh air'

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A brand new alliance for independent candidates is vowing to change the political landscape across East Devon.

On Tuesday, February 3, just 93 days before the national and local elections on May 7, the campaign group East Devon Alliance (EDA) revealed that, as far as the Electoral Commission is concerned, it is now a political party, unveiling a website and manifesto.

However, in reality, the EDA is a broad, umbrella group for similar-minded activists - and now more independent candidates are set to contest district council seats in East Devon than at any point since 1973.

At the launch at the Axminster Heritage Centre, its leaders urged residents - tired of the old political parties - to rally to their cause.

Its leader is Woodbury and Lymington's independent district councillor Ben Ingham, with freelance BBC documentary maker Paul Arnott as chairman and Ian McKintosh, founder of the EDA and retired circuit judge, its president.

Councillor Ingham said: "For years the three main national political parties have been telling us what they want to do instead of listening and then delivering what we need to have. People are so fed up they have even

been voting for the nationalist parties as an alternative, but these alternative parties prey on people's gravest fears... they preach division and separation instead of unity, respect and understanding."

He said it did not have to be like that and insisted that prospective parliamentary candidate Claire Wright, EDA's council candidates and other independent councillors had a "very definite set of ideas."

"Our campaign is like a breath of fresh air in a stagnant room," said Cllr Ingham.

"So, over the next few weeks, all of us in East Devon should open the windows to change, breathe in deeply and take part in the most exciting political event to happen in East Devon for decades."

Their policies range from ensuring that East Devon District Council (EDDC) is more open and accountable, supporting local businesses, preserving the environment, keeping local hospitals open and backing new developments - but only if they are 'sensitive' to what local people want.

Mr Arnott said: "We will allow vulnerable independent candidates to stand as independent East Devon Alliance candidates in May."

"We know how hard it is for independents to stand without the help of a party machine."

He said that the EDA had heard



■ Members of the East Devon Alliance at their launch event.

many complaints from residents about the way things were done at EDDC 'because of national parties first standing in local elections 40 years ago, it has led today to an atrophied one-party disaster...'

"There's no point just moaning

from the sidelines... the only way to reform our council is through the ballot box," he said.

"In May, the people of East Devon will be offered independent candidates across the district on a previously unknown scale."

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