

County & District Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date of Report: 9th January 2023
Devon County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington
(incl. Harberton, Harbertonford, Staverton, Landscope & part of Berry Pomeroy)
South Hams District Councillor for Dartington & Staverton

Devon County Council: key issues

DCC proposes to set a budget to safeguard social care and services for children

“A huge effort to identify savings and a welcome cash boost from the Government mean budgets to protect vulnerable children and adults in Devon can be increased this year.

Last summer, DCC warned of a perfect storm of soaring inflation and rising demand for services meant sweeping budget cuts could be needed unless tough action was taken to rein in costs and the Government provided more cash. Since then almost £50 million of savings have been identified in DCC spending, and the Government has announced a potential cash boost of almost 10% in our funding.

This means that the target budget for 2023/24 now calls for an 18.4% increase in spending on children’s services with an 8.8% rise in adult social care. The budget for public health and communities is set to go up by 5.4% and climate change, environment and transport by 3.5%.

In all, the service revenue budget will rise by 10.5% from £630 million to £696 million if the target budget is approved by councillors next month. DCC Cabinet meets this Wednesday to discuss the proposals.

DCC offers help with keeping New Year Resolutions: [One Small Step](https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/keep-your-new-year-resolution-with-the-help-of-one-small-step/) is a free lifestyle service, funded by DCC to support the health and wellbeing of Devon residents. Friendly advisors can help you plan lifestyle changes and support you to maintain a healthier weight, stop smoking, drink less or become more active. The flexible support means DCC can help you focus on small achievable steps to fit in with your lifestyle and routine. More information at this weblink <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/keep-your-new-year-resolution-with-the-help-of-one-small-step/>

Active Travel Funding award

DCC has just been awarded just over £580,000 to enable and encourage more people to walk and cycle in the County. This Government funding will be used to accelerate walking and cycling schemes across Devon and make roads safer for everyone. It can't be used for construction of infrastructure, but it can be used to design walking and cycling routes. DCC are now drawing up initial designs for walking and cycling routes in Barnstaple, Newton Abbot and Exeter, and a potential new route between Crediton and Exeter. We'll also develop proposals for new walking and cycling networks for several market and coastal towns, and do further work on proposals for low traffic neighbourhood trials. In South Hams, Gemma Briscow has been designated as the officer to support and help develop schemes in this area. I'll report further when I hear more.

HIGHWAYS MATTERS

DCC's Road Safety Team maintain a **Casualty Dashboards** for Councillors and the public. This is the link to the **Public Dashboards:** [Data Dashboards - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/data-dashboards-roads-and-transport)

REPORT IT webpage - Highways issues, from street lights not working to drains flooding and potholes, these can be reported directly into DCC's Report it webpages. This sends a message directly to the DCC commissioned service providers use this link and follow the symbol to the maps when you can pinpoint the problem, receive a reference number which will trigger a notification to let you know when the fault is likely to be repaired and you can use this to track the repair or add your weight/ name to a problem already reported in:
<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/>

Re: Stagecoach Bus services in Bridgetown, Totnes. – reply to petition from DCC

The Gold Bus service was re-routed in August, such that residents need to walk to Bridgetown Hill (A381) to catch the Gold bus, or use the 88 bus service (which is not the same as the previous Gold Bus service or routes). Residents have been very active in trying to get this service reinstated. On their behalf I presented a petition to DCC Leader, Cllr John Hart at last month's DCC Full Council meeting on December 8th. At that meeting I also submitted questions regarding the impact of taking out these services and the lack public consultation which has been dire.

“ 21 December 2022

Petition from residents of Bridgetown, Totnes requesting reinstatement of Stagecoach Service

Dear All,

Thank you for your petition, which was presented to County Council on 8 December 2022 by Councillor Hodgson on behalf of residents of Bridgetown, Totnes.

Devon County Council, acting as the Public Transport Authority, does not have the ability to order Stagecoach to reinstate the Gold Bus service through the Bridgetown estate in Totnes. The Gold Bus Service is a commercially operated bus route and it is for Stagecoach decide on how they respond to the petition.

The Gold bus service was historically routed down Bridgetown Road, but over time became unreliable due to congestion. It was then rerouted into Bridgetown in an attempt to improve its reliability. Earlier this year, Devon County Council started receiving complaints from residents about the larger double deck Gold buses causing damage within the estate as there was not sufficient road space for them to pass through. Following ongoing engagement between Stagecoach representatives and DCC Neighbourhood and Transport Officers, a working solution could not be found. As a result, Stagecoach went back to operating the direct route on Bridgetown Road. To partially mitigate this service reduction, Stagecoach incorporated an additional turning loop on the 88 service through Bridgetown.

Devon County Council is not able to subsidise an additional intertown bus service through Bridgetown given the limited road space for the larger intertown buses, the proximity of the Gold Bus Stops, and the availability of the 88 service and the B1B service, all of which provide access health, education, employment and shopping opportunities.

Yours sincerely

Meg Booth, Director, Climate Change, Environment & Transport”

At the DCC meeting last month, Cllr Andrea Davies, Cabinet member for Highways and Infrastructure at DCC agreed to look into these problems and see what can be done. As this is such a disappointing response, I will put forward further questions in this regard in particular regarding how the new ‘Enhanced Partnership’ can play a role in supporting important bus services being reinstated.

BIKE RACK Proposals for Totnes & Dartington

Further to the notification I received some weeks ago regarding some bike racks being available to this area, Maiken Hutchens, TC Green Travel Coordinator has proposed the following sites for additional bikes racks and a couple of changes to current sites as follows:

- Steamer Quay (5 rack)
- Single or double rack at Leechwell Gardens (to replace the useless ones currently there, moved closer to garden entrance)
- 2x single racks for hospital (not yet confirmed if they would like them)
- Meadowbrook (not yet confirmed if they would like them)
- Bridgetown Hall (not yet confirmed if they would like them)
- move the loose bike rack from the Plains to St John's Church as they are keen to have it

School Report – An officer report into inclusivity at Devon’s Schools – attached as a separate document.

KEVICCS – Bid to purchase Elmhirst Site and Building. No further updates or developments!

Let’s Talk Pre-Teens

A partnership led by The South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership, is running a series of online webinars to accompany a toolkit. This has been developed as a result of the resounding success of the Let’s Talk

Teenagers programme that has seen 2,497 engagements with parents and carers so far. The Let's Talk programme is designed to increase parent and carers' knowledge around the key risks while giving simple tools and techniques to help them support their child. The free online sessions for parents and carers of pre-teens start this month, running on Tuesdays, 17, 24 and 31 January. Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lets-talk-pre-teens-tickets-473303382157>

Final Dates for grants from DCC Locality budgets for this year: In preparation to close the 2022-23 financial accounts and to make sure projects receive any in-year Locality Budget grant payments in good time, please note that the Locality Budget 2022-23 will be closing on **Friday 24th February, at midnight**. Any application received after this date and time will not be processed and will have to wait until any future Locality Budget provision (as ratified by Council) is re-opened in the new financial year (2023-24).

Public Consultation - Healthwatch Devon wants your views on mental health services

Healthwatch Devon has launched a New Year consultation to discover more about local people's experiences trying to access mental health services in the region. Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay is the independent consumer champion for health and social care services, ensuring the voice of the community is used to influence and improve services for local people. They consistently gather public feedback and produce reports on local healthcare services, complete with recommendations for change, which are shared with providers and commissioners of services and used to inform plans or changes for improvement. The first stage of the [consultation is an online survey](#). Alternatively, you can request a printed version by emailing info@hwdevon-plymouth-torbay.org or calling free on 0800 520 0640

LOCAL ISSUES:

REMINDER - ROAD CLOSURES Totnes Fore Street (from the King Bill to East Gate Arch) and South Street. January 2023 to Easter due to Gas maintenance works and installation of fibre. This work has already commenced and it is not easy for everyone. If needed this is the contact for the project manager for these works who will be on site daily: Dan Shaw Giles - dan.shaw.giles@wwutilities.co.uk 07773 540011

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT 2023 takes place this year Monday 27th February to Sunday March 12th.

Totnes Climate & Ecological emergency working group: the next meeting will be **virtual only on January 17th 2023** (in case the weather is poor etc) on Zoom at this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81347699786> Meeting ID: 813 4769 9786. Future monthly meetings will be hybrid, i.e. in person in the Guildhall and also accessible interactively via a Zoom link.

Totnes Climate Hub events are posted on-line at this link: <https://totnesclimatehub.info/events/>

Talking Climate Justice Tour, Saturday 21st January at St John's Church, Bridgetown. 10am – 3pm. hosted by Christian Aid, and supported by Totnes TC, Totnes Fairtrade and Totnes Climate Hub, will take place in St John's Church. The event will include lunch, stalls and group discussions plus a panel discussion and Q&A with George Monbiot, Carolyn Voaden, Jacqi Hodgson, Lydia Peris and Jill Lewis. Free event – donations to Christian Aid. To book a place incl lunch go to: <https://ttm.churchsuite.com/events/3ovptz3>

Devon Climate Emergency News and Newsletter is at this link: <https://devonclimateemergency.org.uk>