

County Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date: 2nd June 2025
Devon County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington
Cabinet Member for Climate & Biodiversity (incl Transport)
(incl. Harberton, Harbertonford, Staverton, Landscope & part of Berry Pomeroy)
South Hams District Councillor for Dartington & Staverton
SHDC Executive Portfolio Councillor for Waste and Composting

Devon County Council (DCC) key issues: Devon County Council Full Council meeting 22nd May
The following appointments were made:

Devon Council Chairperson, Cllr Caroline Leaver (Barnstaple South, LD)
Vice Chair, Cllr Rosie Dawson (Dawlish, LD)

Leader of the Council: Cllr Julian Brazil (Kingsbridge, LD)
Deputy Leader: Cllr Paul Arnott (Seaton & Colyton, LD)

Cabinet:

Leader, Children's safeguarding, Education	Cllr Julian Brazil
DL. Local Government Reorganisation, Water Quality	Cllr Paul Arnott
Children's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	Cllr Denise Bickley (Sidmouth, LD)
Children's Social Services	Cllr Richard Jefferies (Feniton & Honiton, LD)
Highways	Cllr Dan Thomas (South Brent & Yealmpton, LD)
Adult services	Cllr Richard Keeling (Chudleigh & Teign Valley, LD)
Finance	Cllr James Buczkowski (Cullompton & Bradninch, LD).
Assets & Resources, incl. economy & skills	Cllr Simon Clist (Willand & Uffculme, LD)
Rural Affairs, incl. Delivery of Broadband	Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin (Torrington Rural, LD)
Climate change and biodiversity, incl. transportation	Cllr Hodgson (Totnes & Dartington, GP)

Leader's speech

At the meeting, new leader, Councillor Julian Brazil, said that he is 'determined to deliver the very best' for the county's most vulnerable children. To underline his commitment to the safeguarding and education of Devon's children, the children's services portfolio will be the responsibility of three cabinet members, who will work closely to improve the outcomes of all children and young people in Devon. "We have been failing our most vulnerable children for far too long, and we want to send a message; our children need us, and we must deliver. We want to deliver the very best for them. We want to ensure that they have the same opportunities as other children, and we want to help them make good choices and support them with their aspirations. For me, this should be the judge of the success or failure of this administration."

He also outlined other top priorities such as fixing Devon's roads and made the following comments: "Potholes are one of our top priorities. We've got to sort out highways maintenance, and the plague of potholes on our roads. If we can, we should bring the contract back in-house. As we saw with rubbish collection in the South Hams, if you outsource one of your core services, when things go wrong you've lost control."

"The only way we can deliver the services the public need and deserve is to work with our partners, by creating productive relationships with agencies from the NHS to schools, from parish and town councils to community groups. We know money is incredibly tight but by working together we can achieve so much more. We have a huge task ahead of us, I recognise that, but we're all very excited to get on with the job. There needs to be a change of culture; Devon must be more outward looking. For too long it has been far too insular, and that mentality has got to change. We've got to do it differently. So many people have told me that they just want us all to work together for the good of our communities. I agree, it's the right way forward. It doesn't matter what political tribe you're from, if your top priority is to do what's best for your community then we're on the same side. Too much time and energy can be wasted over petty political squabbles when we should be focused on delivering the services residents expect."

“Councillors should vote on each issue, putting their communities first. Party politics should not feature. The Lib Dems have pledged to work with all party groups, particularly with the Green Party, which has six councillors and whose leader, Cllr Jacqi Hodgson (Totnes), is now a cabinet member.”

At this Full Council meeting the following decisions were taken:

Swift Brick Motion (amended)

(a) that the Council supports the principal of installing swift boxes in Devon County Council owned properties and will urgently seek to deliver the installation of swift boxes and audio lures to attract breeding pairs this nesting season at Taw View and Great Moor House, and subject to the need to consider financial and planning implications, introduce at County Hall, with a view to rolling out a full programme of swift boxes and audio lures at DCC owned properties across Devon before the next nesting season.

(b) Write to Secretary of State Angela Rayner and all Devon MPs to express Devon County Council's support for the 'swift brick amendment' in the Infrastructure and Planning Bill. The amendment would make swift bricks mandatory in new housing developments.

(c) That the County Council promotes the installation of swift boxes across the County, in its communities, noting the urgency of the nesting period from mid-May to July.

The amended Motion, as outlined in full above, was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

(Subsequent to which I have today signed a letter to Angela Rayner, Secretary of State for Communities)

Support for the Devon 20's Plenty Campaign – my tabled motion, seconded by Cllr Jess Bailey:

“In light of the support for the Devon 20's Plenty campaign, this Council will support a new policy to permit 20's plenty where people live, work, play and go to school and the implementation of 20mph zones, where the local Parish Council has passed the 20's Plenty motion. There will be no further need for 3 fatalities to provide a score to support this”

In accordance with Standing Orders the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

DCC Cabinet Meeting 23.05.25 – Key discussions & decisions taken:

(DCC) Internal Fostering Offer - RESOLVED

(a) that the 2025/26 basic fostering rate for children aged 16+ be increased in line with the 2025/26 National Minimum Allowance;

(b) that, in future, all fostering allowances be increased in line with the National Minimum Allowances and/or inflation, where they would otherwise fall below the NMA, without referral to Cabinet;

(c) that a scheme be approved, as set out in 3.6 of the Report, to provide foster carers with an annual payment against their council tax liability based on the number of weeks they provide care to a Devon County Council looked after child;

(d) that the creation of an equipment budget out of existing budgets be approved;

(e) that the creation of budgets for each fostering team to fund a range of support and retention activities out of existing budgets also be approved;

(f) that the creation of 2 fostering independent reviewing officer posts out of existing budgets be agreed; and

(g) that the Leader of the Council write to all foster carers expressing his thanks for their contribution and support to the Council and fostering service.

Recommissioning of Local Healthwatch Contract - RESOLVED

(a) that the commencement of a competitive procurement process for the delivery of a local Healthwatch Service, with an intended contract start date of 1st April 2026, be approved;

(b) that the delivery of a joint local Healthwatch Service across Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council be approved; and

(c) that delegated authority be given to the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care in consultation with the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and the Director of Finance and Public Value (s151 Officer) to award the contract.

Your local representation at DCC - My new roles at Devon County Council:

- **Cabinet member for climate change and biodiversity**, which includes transportation, such as improvements to the bus network and delivery of electric vehicle chargers. Active Travel Routes are also part of this.

- **Leader of Green and Independent Group** (GIG - 6 Greens and 2 Independents). This group has representation in East Devon, North Devon, Exeter City and South Hams. We have been appointed to some chair and deputy chair roles at DCC:

Chair of Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Comm.	Cllr Jess Bailey (Otter Valley, Ind)
Deputy Chair, Children's Services, Scrutiny Comm.	Cllr Sara Wilson (Ilfracombe, GP)
Chair, Devon Farm Estate Comm	Cllr Henry Gent (Broadclyst, GP)
Deputy Chair, Investment & Pension Fund Comm.	Cllr Henry Gent (Broadclyst, GP)
Deputy Chair, Public Rights of Way Comm	Cllr Paul Hayward (Axminster, Ind)
Deputy Chair, Audit Comm.	Cllr Paul Hayward (Axminster, Ind)

Key priorities for the Green & Independents Group (GIG) have so far been identified as follows:

- Carry out a comparative review of costs of services currently mostly 3rd party agencies and similar companies, compared to bring services back in house as part of the work and deliberations towards proposals for Local Government Reform
- Introduction of a 20's Plenty across Devon policy, where Town and Parish Council's request this; "20's Plenty where people live, work, play and go to school"
- Reintroduction of Universal Access Youth services across Devon based on TRAYE model; i.e. where Town and Parish Councils are prepared to pay 50% of costs (current contribution approx. £3,500 p.a. per fortnightly service)
- Wider re-introduction of public transport

Proposed new Parking Priority Policy at DCC for Emergency public service First Responders whereby they would have a vehicle disk that would enable them to park as close as possible to their home as they need to be able to carry heavy equipment to their vehicle as they rush to respond to emergency calls. The vital minutes saved could save lives. **Having raised this at last month's Town and parish meetings I report to, I would value the support of Town and Parish Councils for this future motion at DCC.**

Closure of Rushbrook Youth Space, Totnes: I have met with the Director of Services for Communities, (which includes Youth services) and the senior officer for Youth Services at DCC to discuss this situation. The heightened problem of funding has been due to the ongoing rise on the call for this funding for targeted youth services. The decision about closing Rushbrook to youth services was made some months back with the Cabinet Portfolio holder at the time and is part of a wider reduction in funding for the youth hubs that were the skeletal youth support provision across the County from 2013 on. Rushbrook youth space will not be reopened, but the reuse of the space is yet to be determined. There is no plan at present to remove Rushbrook Community centre from DCC's ownership. The officers say that they will be approaching town councils in the autumn with a view to ideally establishing youth hubs in towns and / or services in places where town or parish councils will raise their precepts to cover the costs.

In the meantime, for Totnes, **DCC has agreed to fund £11,800 towards the costs of additional youth services being delivered by Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) project.** This will provide a weekly youth service for the older age group (13-18) to be held at the United Free Church in Fore St., Totnes from May'25-May'26. The previously fortnightly Friday Night sessions at Totnes Pavilions will now be hosted weekly by TRAYE, to help increase local capacity and access to youth services for young people. DCC funded SPACE youth group will also provide support youth workers for these additional services

This matter has been raised at TRAYE project and various meetings have been held with SPACE and DCC officers to create these agreements which are likely to be transitional and cover the phasing out of DCC's universal access youth services.

TRAYE project position on the closure of the Youth Space at Rushbrook: This matter was raised at TRAYE project AGM on 31.05.25 and a focus group is being set up to investigate an alternative dedicated youth space in Totnes. Part of the useful evidence that will inform this investigation is a survey that was carried out by TRAYE that found that the majority of young people who attend TRAYE sessions who are based in and around Totnes would like a Youth Café. It was also agreed that this would need an additional attached space that could be used for sports and other activities. It was agreed that a potential partner, perhaps a local small enterprise could also

be investigated to run the café / catering side of the space and that this could assist with funding the youth services.

Update on the sale of sites at KEVICC: Assurance has been provided by Headmaster Alan Salt that all monies from the sale of sites at KEVICC will remain with the school and will not be shared across the other schools that are part of Education South West Academy.

20's Plenty – New 20mph routes in Totnes proposed to fill in current 30mph gaps. Further to Totnes Town Council approving the proposed 20mph speed restriction routes which I sent back into the officers, (and the subsequent support from Dartington Parish Council for the proposed extension of one of the routes into Dartington Parish), I have received the following reply:

Thank you for following up with the community Transport Forum's working group as we had discussed. The project team has considered and reviewed the requested changes to the initially scoped scheme and provides the following responses:

20mph scheme alterations

- The map as proposed by DCC 20mph, plus the changes from 20mph zones to 20mph roads as discussed at my meeting with yourselves – is agreed
- Plymouth Road extending [20mph] up to Follaton Lodge at the junction of Plymouth Road that borders with Harberton and Dartington – This request cannot be included due to the nature of the road layout and the likely compliance without the use of on carriageway traffic calming features
- [adding in] Jubilee Road – This will be included up to the existing 30mph gateway along Bourton Lane
- The top of Bridgetown Hill just east from the junction with Blackpost Lane (where the current 30mph VAS sign sits) down to the junction with Bridgetown and then into Bridgetown and continuing further down over the Old Bridge and on to the junction with the mini roundabout at the Plains – Having reviewed the existing road layout we can confirm that adding in the section of Totnes Bridge and Bridgetown from the Plains roundabout through to the junction with Bridgetown Hill can be included within the 20mph zone. The extension of the 20mph zone along Bridgetown Hill would not be suitable.
- Weston Lane and the smaller roads that have been formed and that are now residential further to the completion of the Great Court Farm development at the top of Bridgetown – Agreed, and will be incorporated into the proposed 20mph
- Borough Park Road and the industrial estate roads including Babbage Road, Ford Road and Wills Road – Agreed, and will be incorporated into the proposed 20mph
- The A385 arterial route that passes through Totnes from the roundabout junction with the A381 from Newton Abbot, on to the Coronation Road roundabout and onto Station Road to Redworth junction and on into Ashburton Road, passing entrance to King Edward VI Community College (KEVICC) as far as the junction with Clay Lane (just west of Puddavine Terrace). – The existing road layout would not be suitable for 20mph however the existing flashing advisory 20mph signage will be improved/updated to meet current design guidance.
- Barracks Hill, continuing from the proposed new 20mph to link up with the current 20mph at Cott Road (i.e. making this road all the same 20mph speed limit) – Having reviewed this section of road the layout is not suitable for 20mph without the introduction of additional traffic calming features. These additional features will need to be investigated and would require an additional funding source to be identified as this is outside of the current scheme scope.

30mph scheme additions

The overarching objective of the current project is to introduce 20mph schemes within the identified towns across Devon. This work, whilst including resulting extent changes to other speed limits, has not budgeted for wider speed limit reviews and alterations. As such the requests for additional speed limit changes cannot be progressed under this project.

The request for a SCARF assessment of the A384 Riverford Bridge past Steiner School is noted and will be passed through to the Neighbourhood Team for consideration.

We hope that this response provides clarity on the elements being progressed under the current 20mph scheme within Totnes. We are progressing the Totnes scheme in line with the project plan and will be in touch in due course to agree the final proposed plan and approval to advertise. Updates will be reported back and discussed at Totnes & District Traffic and Transport Forum meetings. (Next T&DTTF meeting in July.

Totnes – Littlehempston All Access Path. No updates at present

Local Traffic Works:

Temporary Traffic Notice - Moore Farm to Dorsley Park Farm, Harberton (TTRO2563395)

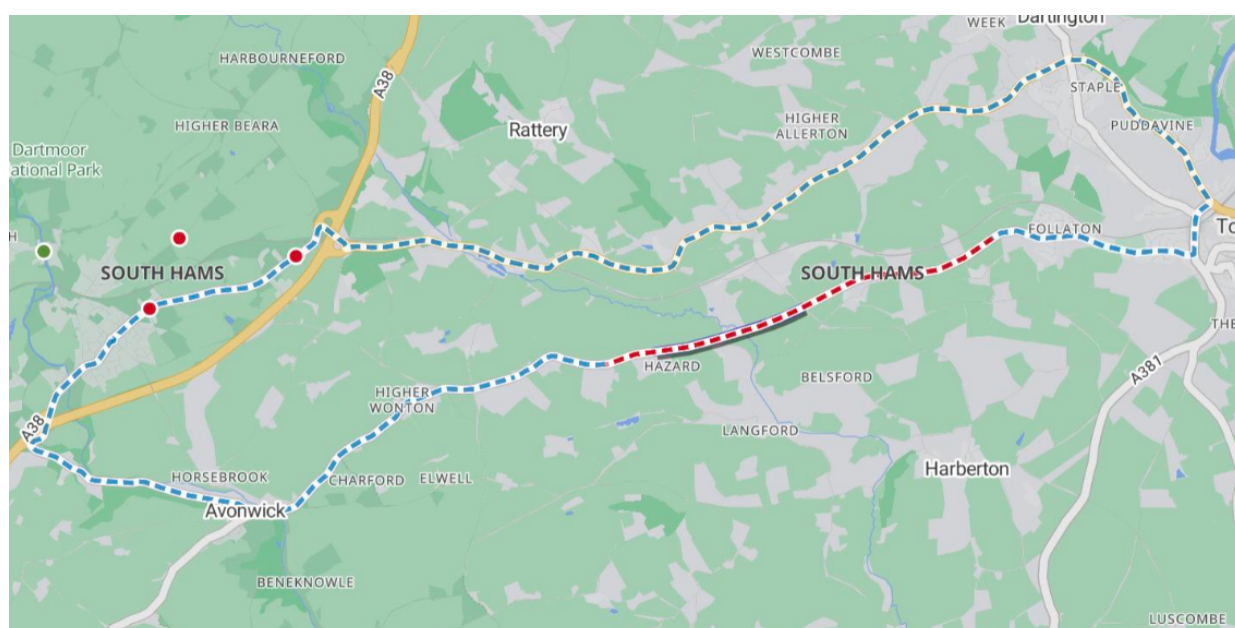
TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL hereby give **NOTICE** that: From **MONDAY 16 JUNE 2025** for a maximum of 5 days Until **FRIDAY 20 JUNE 2025** (both dates inclusive)

No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed on the sections of Affected Roads. Roads affected -

MOORE FARM TO DORSLEY PARK FARM, TOTNES

The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - HIGHER PLYMOUTH ROAD – PLYMOUTH ROAD – A381 – A385 – B3372 & VICE VERSA. This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - **SURFACE DRESSING**

For additional information contact: **KIELY BROS.** Telephone: 07425 158911



Swallowfields, Totnes Parking issues. An open meeting to enable a public consultation on site (Green Space near Dartington Lower Lane) has been arranged for **Saturday June 28th 10am – 2pm**. LiveWest intend to also have representatives from South Devon Community Energy to provide householders with energy efficiency information. I will contact Swallowfields residents about this event (as LiveWest will only be contacting their tenants)

Community Composting in Totnes area. The proposed site at Follaton House is still under discussion. The issue of suitably sized vehicles to support the variously sized projects with shredding and turning the materials deposited on site has developed into a larger discussion, taking in the prospects for the project as local Government Reorganisation and associated changes are established. To assist this a **Community Composting groups networking event** will be held at **Follaton on Thursday 19th June from 2-4pm for all Community Composting groups** to send representatives for sharing information and in particular participate in discussion about the machines that might be suitable for some of the more challenging sites emerging.

Totnes: Totnes Climate & Ecological Emergency Working Group. The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 24th June, Midsummer Day at 6.30pm**. This will take place at **Castle Meadow** to carry out **The "Big Devon Meadows Count" a biodiversity count at the Meadow**. The Big Devon Meadows Count is a citizen science project aimed at creating a more detailed record of plants outside of nature reserves in Devon, specifically

focusing on species-rich grasslands. This project is a partnership between Moor Meadows and the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. The goal is to increase knowledge of these habitats, improve meadow management practices, and ultimately protect important wildlife sites. More information: <https://moormeadows.org.uk/big-devon-meadows-count-2025/> (These monthly meetings usually take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 6.30pm at Totnes Climate Hub). All welcome.

Totnes Climate Hub hosts many events open to public participation, as does **Transition Town Totnes**: listings at this link: <https://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/events>. They are holding 20th anniversary celebrations this June



Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) project Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on Saturday 31st May in Staverton. Reports from the meeting, including the comprehensive annual report of TRAYE activities will be circulated in due course. In the meantime I wish to pass on the thanks expressed by the Trustees and others present for the support provided by participating Town and Parish Council in the project.

Funding opportunities:

“Below are some **funding**/grants that I have found – please share far and wide to give people an opportunity to see if they are eligible to make an application

Devon County Council: Locality Budgets 2025/26

Devon County Council’s Locality Budgets 2025/26 will soon be opening for applications for funding to support projects that benefit local communities in Devon. Each County Councillor in Devon has a Locality Budget allocation of £8,000 that they can use in this financial year (until March 2026). Devon County Council Members can use their Locality Budget to support good causes in the area that they represent such as projects to address loneliness, increase access to healthy activities, help people experiencing food poverty or enhance public spaces. Applications are accepted from constituted and not-for-private-profit voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector groups and organisations, town and parish councils, charities or businesses (that have an eligible sponsor), or a combination of such groups working together. Refer to the [website](#) for more details about who can apply and exclusions. All projects should include some other financial contribution(s) and/or local support. If you are interested in applying for a contribution from the Locality Budgets please approach your County Councillor in the first instance. You can find contact details for your County Councillor here: [Your Councillors – Democracy in Devon](#) Focus of fund/fund aims: Devon County Council Locality Budgets can be used to support community projects in Devon **Application deadline: If you receive a grant, you must spend the money before 31 March 2026**

Fund description: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/democracy/councillors-info/locality-budgets/>

Bupa Foundation: Green Community Grants

Bupa Foundation’s Green Community Grants programme is set to re-open on 1 June 2025. The programme supports practical projects that help both people and planet health. The aim is to make a positive difference to local communities. The grants scheme is administered by Groundwork UK.

Details of this year’s round have not yet been published but the scheme has previously supported projects that improve or create new green spaces (particularly in cities), benefit and involve the local community and are located in disadvantaged areas. It is expected that grants of up to £2,000 will be available for schools, registered charities, not-for-profit organisations, local authorities and social housing providers. Refer to the [Groundwork UK website](#) for more information when the programme opens on 1 June 2025.

Focus of fund/fund aims: Small grants for projects to improve green spaces. **Application deadline: 30 June 2025**

Fund description: <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/bupa-foundation-green-grants/>

Naturesave Trust: Nature Connection

Naturesave Trust is inviting applications for its Summer 2025 funding round. The theme this time is ‘Nature Connection’ and so the trust is looking for applications from charities, community groups and organisations that are working to connect communities to nature through:

- arts and cultural activities
- community gardening
- green gyms

- eco anxiety and mental health
- training a community with green skills
- conservation volunteering
- urban nature programmes
- social prescribing
- access to nature
- community wildlife surveys
- nature mindfulness

Charities, social enterprises and grassroots community organisations can apply for a grant of up to £5,000. Your organisation and/or project must have a website. The Trust favours smaller groups where the grant can make the most difference. Funding is not available for schools, individuals or government-funded organisations. Focus of fund/fund aims: The Naturesave Trust issues three funding calls each year, with a specific environmental focus each time: the Summer 2025 theme is nature connection.

Application deadline: 10 July 2025

Fund description: <https://naturesave.co.uk/naturesave-trust/trust-application-form/>

Tesco Stronger Starts: Cooking for All

150 grants of £1,000 each are up for grabs from the Tesco Stronger Starts 'Cooking for All' fund which aims improve access to healthy food for children. The focus is on projects supporting children and young people up to the age of 16 with access to healthy, nutritious food, and educating them around food, particularly how to cook. Schools and not-for profit organisations can apply for a £1,000 grant. Focus of fund/fund aims: Grants for schools and not-for-profit organisations that support children with nutrition, healthy eating and cooking

Application deadline: 30 May 2025 Fund description: <https://tescostrongerstarts.org.uk/cookingfund/>

Co-op Foundation: Future Communities Fund

Not-for-profit organisations can apply for an unrestricted grant for their work to help young people with experience of the youth justice system to re-build their lives and settle back into their communities in the UK. The funding comes from the Co-op Foundation's 'Future Communities Fund' which has a budget of £1.75 million for this round. Grants of up to £30,000 per year for five years (a maximum value of £150,000 over the five years) are available. It is anticipated that around 10 organisations will receive a grant.

If your not-for-profit organisation has an annual income of £250,000 or less and mainly focuses on supporting justice-experienced young people to re-engage with their community, you can apply for an unrestricted grant from the Future Communities Fund. The funding is for organisations that work exclusively in the UK. Focus of fund/fund aims: Unrestricted grants for not-for-profit organisations that provide support for justice-experienced young people aged 10-25 years old in the UK

Application deadline: 16 June 2025 Fund description:

<https://www.coopfoundation.org.uk/how-we-fund/future-communities-fund/>

Karen Dent | Community and Health Engagement Coordinator.

South Hams and West Devon Outreach | 07895 447613 (Usual working days: Tues, Weds and Thursday.)