

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026

Devon County Council (DCC) key issues:

Reminder to let your views be known - Shaping the future of Devon's library service: Devon

Libraries – public Consultation: As detailed in my previous monthly report “Devon County Council is committed to ensuring that library services continue to meet the needs of our communities, but financial pressures mean we must now look at how services are delivered. We are inviting you to give your views on the proposed changes to the library service and any alternatives you may wish to propose.”



[Have your say on the proposals](#) before 22 February 2026!

Young people can [complete our survey for young people](#).

DCC Cabinet 09.12.25; key decisions:

1. Barnstaple Longbridge junction improvement – phase 1 construction scheme approved. This will link in with the highways layout and other improvements at Barnstaple station. This is generating a much safer and more pedestrian and cycling friendly transport hub linking the station and the town centre and the Tarka Trail.

2. Tarka Trail – Willingcott to Knowle – phase 4; Spreadcombe Junction to Nethercott Road and Phase 6, Nethercott Rd to Knowle. Construction of phases, 4a, 4b and 6 were approved. These are new sections that include the need for compulsory purchase orders etc to complete more sections of this important and very popular Active Travel route.

3. Endorsed the Plymouth & South Devon Community Forest (PSDCF) Plan 2025-2050



The Creation of the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest.

In 1991 the first Community Forests were established in England by Government. They are non-statutory designations and seek to bring woods and trees into towns and cities with people central to the process. Through gradual growth there are now 15 Community Forests covering 20% of England's land area.

In 2020 the government sought to grow the Community Forest family. This involved the creation of two new forests, alongside around £100m of Nature for Climate funds being allocated to accelerate woodland creation with community benefit. Plymouth City Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, the National Trust and the Woodland Trust created a proposal for the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest (PSDCF) and were successful in getting government support. PSDCF came into being in June 2021.

Boundary Map of the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest

The original boundary took in all of Plymouth and parts of South Hams, West Devon including parts of Dartmoor. In 2022, to increase its impact, the PSDCF was extended to take in all of Dartmoor (see Figure 1). It is general practice that in delivering its work, Community Forests work to a 10 mile “halo”, enabling it in some circumstances to deliver funding and support beyond its boundary in agreement with partners.

The original five partners have been joined by the County Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority. The PSDCF is not a dense forest of shady trees as we would traditionally know it. The community forest is a mosaic and includes every tree across the area - from individual garden trees to large scale forests. PSDCF delivers a network of trees and woods from urban parks to the rainforests of Dartmoor.

The PSDCF Plan. Along with the other 14 Community Forests across England, the PSDCF partnership has developed a Community Forest Plan for 2025 – 2050.

The PSDCF Plan is designed to accelerate tree planting and woodland management and engage communities in this work. It sets out a local vision, objectives, principles, targets and initial plans for delivery through to 2030.

It is providing a framework to coordinate and support organisations to achieve their planting aspirations. It aligns with statutory plans such as Local Plans, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and National Landscape Management Plans, as well as organisational plans such as Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Plans.

The delivery of the PSDCF Plan will largely lie with the organisations, communities, businesses and landowners who share the passion for a future forest and embrace the aims of the plan.

The Plan’s Vision Given the importance of the community forest for current residents and future generations, the vision paints a picture of what could be. It underpins all the actions set out in the plan, and all the activity that is taking place on the ground:

“The Community Forest will be known for its thriving trees and woodlands, connecting the communities and landscapes of Plymouth, South Devon, West Devon and Dartmoor. It will stretch from the streets and parks of Plymouth to the uplands of Dartmoor and be rich in wildlife; celebrated and cherished by all and delivering natural solutions to climate change. The Community Forest will connect people to nature, drive equitable access to the benefits of trees and woods, and plant the seeds of a better future for all.”

Link to plan:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s53965/Plymouth%20and%20South%20Devon%20Community%20Forest%20Plan%202025-2050.pdf>

4. Approved the Community Protocol, that draws together the various volunteering, self-help and self-delivery schemes that support the work of the Climate Change, Environment and Transport directorate.

“Following the introduction of the Road Warden scheme in 2014, the Highways and Traffic Management Service (HTMS) has pioneered community self-help nationally. In addition to the Road Warden scheme, the Service also works with local community Snow Wardens to help build community resilience and share important warning and informing messages. These self-help schemes have been expanded into a trial of self-delivery that looks to support local councils that would like to deliver minor improvements such as 20mph speed limits and pedestrian crossings in their community.

The HTMS is often approached by local councils that would like to see enhanced levels of maintenance within their boundaries or become frustrated as the Service is unable to deliver their priorities which are often relatively simple changes to signing or traffic management.

This proposal looks at providing local councils with an alternative option to take forward minor improvements themselves where there is support from their community.”

I encourage Town and Parish Councils to review this protocol in line with their own experiences of managing and delivering local self-help works. Please do let me have your views so that I can feed them back to ensure this new protocol will work for you.

Link to Community Protocol:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s53929/Community%20Protocol%20Agreement%20Dec%202025.pdf>

5. Housing Position Statement – Cabinet Resolved that

- (a) that Cabinet work with partners to maximise the benefit from the Social and Affordable Homes Programme by: advocating for a meaningful national definition of affordable housing that is compatible with housing demand and supply in rural areas. ii. promote greater support and funding for Community Land Trusts; and iii. commit to work with partners to achieve a higher minimum target for the proportion of affordable homes in larger developments across Devon.
- b) to support the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CAA) to:
 - i. investigate establishing a resource that delivers best quality viability negotiation in planning decisions working with Torbay Council.
 - ii. develop a Spatial Development Strategy and engage with regional partners; and
 - iii. create a Housing Intelligence Unit building a Devon and Torbay wide housing data set working with partners and consider our needs assessment data being included to assist with monitoring demand and supply.
- (c) that agreement be reached with district council partners opportunities, timeline and resource commitment to secure additional tenancies and permanent housing solutions for Care Leavers.
- (d) agree that the delivery of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) should be a key component of development strategies.
- (e) to note the County Council’s facilitation of the bid into the next round of Brown Field Land Release Fund to unlock potential housing sites, including one County Council site.
- (f) to note the Specialist and Supported Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy initial findings to support vulnerable adults and delegate to the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care, Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets and Resources to use this report to feed into Local Plan consultations and the CCA’s Spatial Development Strategy.

n.b. This will be very relevant to the current work now commenced by South Hams District Council to review the Local Plan. It also prepares any future new Unity Local Authority for supporting and engaging with supporting the need for truly affordable housing across the county.

6. Devon SEND Sufficiency Strategy Cabinet RESOLVED

- (a) that the Devon SEND Sufficiency Strategy, as a central driver of Devon’s SEND Transformation Programme, recognising the need to shift towards a more inclusive and locally responsive education system, be approved;
- (b) that the Council’s engagement with national and regional partners to influence future funding policy and position Devon as a leading pilot area for inclusive education reform also be approved; and
- (c) that the Council be authorised to pursue additional government investment to enable delivery of the strategy at scale, including upfront transformational revenue required to deliver whole-system change.

n.b. This is further to considerable discussions going on about improving value for money on children’s services, in particular the way that many SEND plans are currently delivered and with the intention to improve the experience and outcomes for the young people on SEND programmes.

7. Recommissioning of Support & Accommodation for 16+ Looked After and Care Experienced Young People, and 16/17-year-old youth homelessness Cabinet RESOLVED

- (a) that the ‘My Future, My Way’ (the model for support and accommodation services for young people aged 16+ as described in section 3); and the Procurement Strategy as set out in the report be endorsed;
- (b) that delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director – Childrens Social Care Commissioning and Assistant Director – Finance and Public Value to prepare and launch the procurement of a framework for:
 - i. Support and Accommodation Services for 16 + Looked After and Care Experienced Young.

ii. People and Young People at risk of Homelessness aged 16 and 17; up to value of £140 million over a maximum of a 10-year contract term, based on the proposed approach set out in this report.

(c) that delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Public Value, Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Director of Childrens Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Childrens Social Care and Cabinet Member for Finance to appoint providers onto the Framework and the contract terms;

(d) that delegated authority be given to the Director of Children and Young People’s Futures, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, to approve Call Off contract awards to meet the Council’s assessed needs for Support and Accommodation Services; and

















(e) that the inclusion of a clause in all contractual arrangements under this procurement providing that, upon Local Government Reorganisation, all rights and obligations of Devon County Council under the Framework Agreement and associated Call-Off contracts automatically transfer to the successor unitary authority without requiring further consent from providers, be approved.

Winter Weather – keeping roads safer.

Report a problem

If you are **reporting an emergency** that requires immediate attention, please call us on [0345 155 1004](tel:0345 155 1004). An emergency on the highway is defined as something that is very likely to present an imminent threat to life or serious injury or serious damage to property.

→

 <p>Pothole Large 40 mm vertical-edge hole that is also greater than 300 mm wide</p>	 <p>Parking Request enforcement in residents' parking and on-street parking zones</p>	 <p>Overgrown vegetation Pedestrians forced into road, cars over central line, reduced visibility</p>
 <p>Public rights of way For example, blocked access or broken stiles</p>	 <p>Hazardous or fallen tree or branch Fallen tree or branch, or trees that are leaning, unstable, diseased or dying</p>	 <p>Debris or obstruction Thick mud, soil, stones, embankment slips</p>
 <p>Defective road markings or signs White and yellow, stop or give way lines or warning signs</p>	 <p>Trip hazard Hole or significant difference in level on pavement or cycleway</p>	 <p>Traffic lights Damage or fault to traffic lights or signals or school crossing patrol light</p>
 <p>Broken inspection cover Broken, missing or rocking inspection cover</p>	 <p>Grit bin Empty bin, damaged bin or a bin with contents that are unuseable</p>	 <p>Bridges and retaining walls Structural damage or significant obstructions restricting water flow</p>
 <p>Fences and barriers Damaged or missing roadside fences or barriers</p>	 <p>Ice Ice or snow on the road</p>	 <p>Street lights, lit signs, lit bollards Faulty street light, zebra crossing, bollard, lit sign</p>
 <p>Flooding and blocked drains Standing water, blocked drain, flooded property, impassable road</p>		

For any Highways issues that you need to report into Devon County Council, please use the Devon County Council Report It webpage. Main webpage link:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>

This will take you to the page shown in the picture and you can then click on the relevant icon. This will take you to a map where you can navigate to and identify the location of the problem and then make the report.

Ice and dangerous road surfaces: Major highways, A Roads and Bus routes are gritted by DCC teams.

However other roads and footpaths are required to be gritted and salted by Town and Parish Councils under the Snow Warden Scheme.

GRIT / SALT Bins. Please check your grit and salt bins. You can re-order supplies using the DCC REPORT IT webpages (links above) **Or this direct link for Grit / Salt bins and maps of their locations: This is the direct link (from the Grit Bin icon):**

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/safe-travel/winter-travel/grit-bins/>

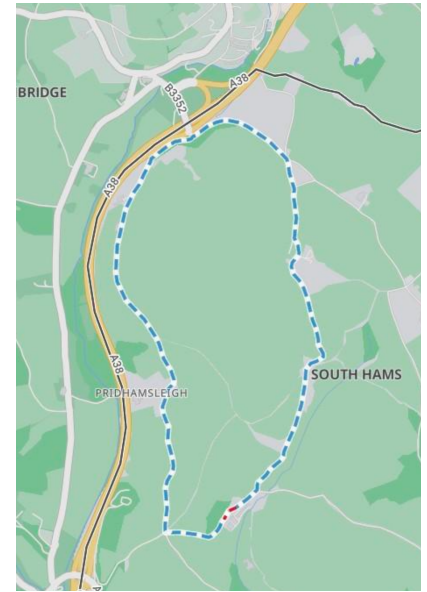
Extreme Weather and Flooding: You can use the Flooding and Blocked Drains link on the Report it page above. There is also a dedicated Flooding Risk Management section on Devon County Council’s website for more information if needed at this link: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/>

Flooding in Totnes caused by Storm Bram on 9th December. Storm Bram brought intense rainfall across the whole County. The DCC Flood Risk team is still gathering information on the incident extent and confirming numbers, but current figures indicate up to 30 properties were affected in total, with nine properties in Totnes (in the area of Warlands, New Walk and The Plains) flooded internally, believed to be from surface

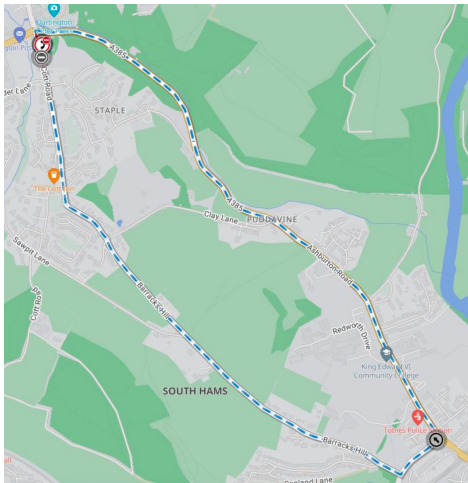
water, which was unable to drain into The River Dart due to heightened river levels, especially at high tide that morning. An investigation report is being prepared at DCC and will be available in due course.

Planned Local Highways Works:

Temporary Traffic Notice - FIVE LANES TO BADDAFORD, Staverton (TTRO2667303). TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL hereby give NOTICE that **from MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2026 for a maximum of 5 days Until FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2026** (both dates inclusive). No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed on the sections of Affected Roads. **Roads affected - FIVE LANES TO BADDAFORD, ASHBURTON.** The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - FIVE LANES TO BADDAFORD, PRIDHAMSLEIGH COTTAGES CROSS TO FIVE LANES CROSS, CABBAGE HILL TO PRIDHAMSLEIGH COTTAGES, CABBAGE HILL, CHULEY CROSS TO BULLAND, BULLAND CROSS TO BADDAFORD CROSS, FIVE LANES TO BADDAFORD.



This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - DRAINAGE WORKS. For additional information contact: **MILESTONE INFRASTRUCTURE.** Telephone: **020 3307 8051**

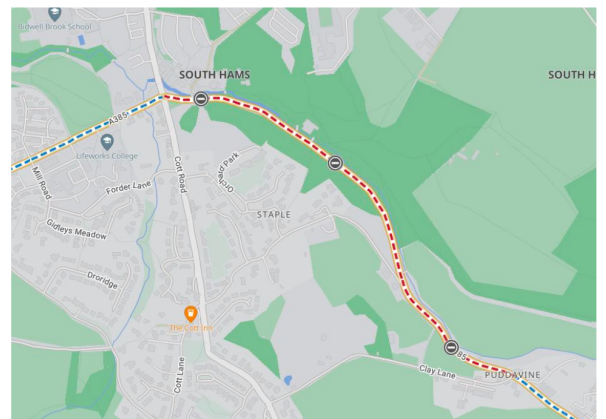
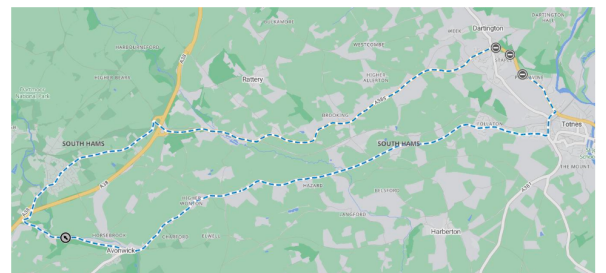


Temporary Traffic Notice - COTT ROAD, Dartington (TTRO2667136): TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL hereby give NOTICE that: **On MONDAY 9 MARCH 2026 for a maximum of 5 days. Anticipated Finish MONDAY 9 MARCH 2026.** Between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30 No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed on the sections of Affected Roads. **Roads affected - COTT ROAD, DARTINGTON. FROM JUNCTION A385 SHINNERS BRIDGE TO QUEENS ARMS.** The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - A385, A381, BARRACKS HILL.

This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - POLE TEST. For additional information contact: **SUNBELT RENTALS.** Telephone: **03700 500792**

Temporary Traffic Notice - A385, Dartington (TTRO2667294). TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL hereby give NOTICE that: **On SUNDAY 15 MARCH 2026 for a maximum of 5 days. Anticipated Finish SUNDAY 15 MARCH 2026.** Between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30. No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed on the sections of Affected Roads. **Roads affected - A385, DARTINGTON , FROM COTT ROAD JUNCTION TO CLAY LANE JUNCTION** The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - A381, PLYMOUTH ROAD, HIGHER PLYMOUTH ROAD, NEW BRIDGE CROSS TO CHARFORD CROSS, OLD BRIDGE CROSS TO AVONWICK BRIDGE, EXETER ROAD TO AVONWICK, B3372.

This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - POLE REPLACEMENT AND OVERHEAD CABLE REPLACEMENT. For additional information contact: **SUNBELT RENTALS** Telephone: **03700 500792**



Temporary Traffic Notice - **COPLAND LANE TO FOLLATON GATE AND PLYMOUTH ROAD, Totnes** (TTRO2667369). TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL hereby give NOTICE that: **From MONDAY 23 MARCH 2026 for a maximum of 5 days. Until THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026** (both dates inclusive) Between the hours of 20:00 and 05:00. No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed on the sections of Affected Roads. **Roads affected – TOTNES, COPLAND LANE TO FOLLATON GATE AND PLYMOUTH ROAD, DARTINGTON.** The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via –

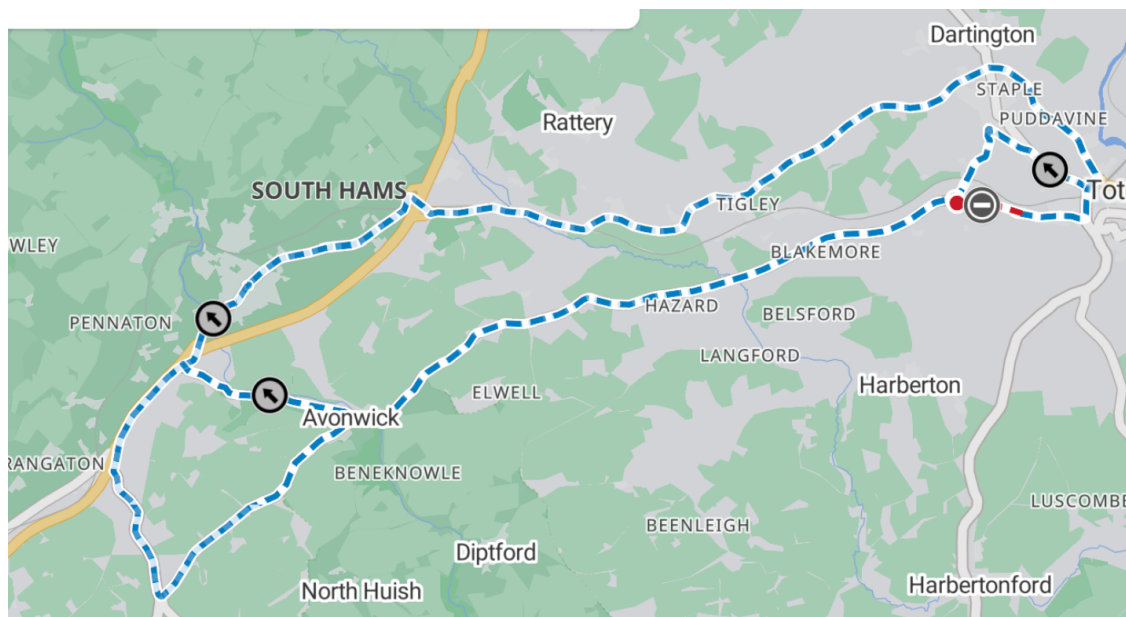
LOOP 1 PLYMOUTH ROAD- WESTERN BY PASS -BARRACKS HILL-BARRACKS HILL TO YARDES GRAVE CROSS -CROSSING CROSS TO LONGCAUSE CROSS - CROSSING CROSS TO FOLLATON GATE -COPLAND LANE TO FOLLATON GATE- BOTH WAYS/VICE VERSA

LOOP 2 CLOCKWISE PLYMOUTH ROAD -DORSLEY BARTON TO FOLLATON GATE - FORK CROSS TO DORSLEY BARTON, - HAZARD CROSS TO FORK CROSS - BLUEPOST TO HAZARD-SHORTER CROSS-WONTON CROSS TO SHORTER CROSS-WONTONHILL CROSS TO WONTON CROSS-CHARFORD CROSS TO WONTONHILL CROSS -NEW BRIDGE CROSS TO CHAGFORD CROSS -EXETER ROAD TO AVONWICK -EXETER ROAD -ROAD FROM STIDSON CROSS TO MARLEY HEAD JUNCTION -MARLEY HEAD TO DESWELL FARM -A385 CHERRY TREES TO CULVER PARK -A385 VENTON CROSS TO TINGLEY CROSS- A385 TIGLEY CROSS TO DUN CROSS- A385 DUNCROSS TO LOWNARD CROSS- A385 LOWNARD CROSS TO SHINNERS BRIDGE- A385 SHINNERS BRIDGE TO QUEENS ARMS- ASHBURTON ROAD TO CLAY LANE- ASHBURTON ROAD-WESTERN BY PASS- PLYMOUTH ROAD

LOOP 2 ANTI CLOCKWISE VEHICLES UNDER 7.5 TONNE PLYMOUTH ROAD - ASHBURTON ROAD - WESTERN BY PASS- ASHBURTON ROAD TO CLAY LANE- A385 CLAY LANE TO QUEENS ARMS - A385 SHINNERS BRIDGE TO QUEENS ARMS - A385 LOWNARD CROSS TO SHINNERS BRIDGE - A385 DUN CROSS TO LOWNARD CROSS -A385 VENTON CROSS TO TIGLEY CROSS - A385 CHERRY TREES TO CUL VER PARK - MARLEY HEAD TO EDESWELL FARM- MARLEY HEAD TO EDESWELL FARM- ROAD FROM STIDSTON CROSS TO MARLEY HEAD JUNCTION-EXETER ROAD - A385 TIGLEY CROSS TO DUN CROSS- EXETER ROAD TO AVONWICK - NEW BRIDGE CROSS TO ZC43 TO CHAGFORD CROSS - CHARFORD CROSS TO WONTONHILL CROSS -WONTONHILL CROSS TO WONTON CROSS- WONTON CROSS TO SHORTER CROSS -SHORTER CROSS TO BLUEPOST -BLUEPOST TO HAZARD -HAZARD CROSS TO FORK CROSS -FORK CROSS TO DORSLEY BARTON - DORSLEY BARTON TO FOLLATON GATE

LOOP 2 ANTI CLOCKWISE VEHICLES OVER 7.5 TONNE PLYMOUTH ROAD - ASHBURTON ROAD - WESTERN BY PASS- ASHBURTON ROAD TO CLAY LANE- A385 CLAY LANE TO QUEENS ARMS - A385 SHINNERS BRIDGE TO QUEENS ARMS - A385 LOWNARD CROSS TO SHINNERS BRIDGE - A385 DUN CROSS TO LOWNARD CROSS -A385 VENTON CROSS TO TIGLEY CROSS - A385 CHERRY TREES TO CUL VER PARK - MARLEY HEAD TO EDESWELL FARM- MARLEY HEAD TO EDESWELL FARM- ROAD FROM STIDSTON CROSS TO MARLEY HEAD JUNCTION-EXETER ROAD - A38T WRANGATON JUNCTION TO SOUTH BRENT JUNCTION KINGSBRIDGE ROAD - A3121 VENN CROSS TO KITTERFORD CROSS ROAD -ROAD FROM LADY WELL FARM TO KITT FORD CROSS -LANGFORD GATE TO LAYDOWN FARM- LANGFORD GATE CROSS TO CHURCH CROSS - ROAD FROM CHURCH CROSS TO AVON INN -NEW BRIDGE CROSS TO CHAGFORD CROSS – CHARFORD CROSS TO WONTONHILL CROSS - WONTONHILL CROSS TO WONTON CROSS- WONTON CROSS TO SHORTER CROSS -SHORTER CROSS TO BLUEPOST - BLUEPOST TO HAZARD HAZARD CROSS TO FORK CROSS -FORK CROSS TO DORSLEY BARTON - DORSLEY BARTON TO FOLLATON GATE

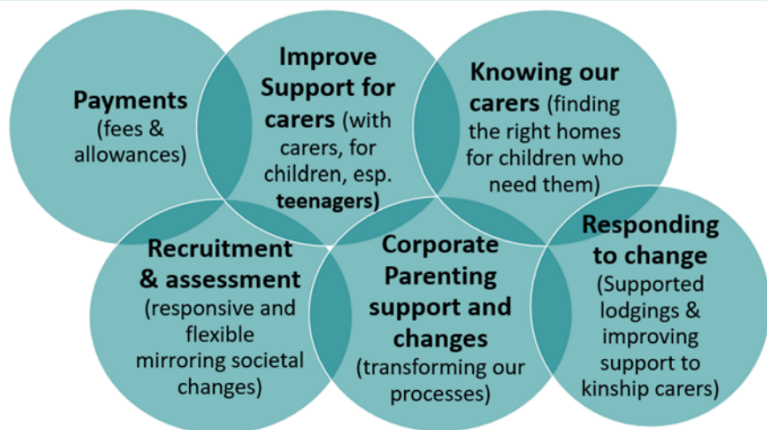
This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - CABLING FOR NEW CUSTOMER CONNECTION
For additional information contact: **SUNBELT RENTALS**
Telephone: 03700 500792



DCC Fostering Services: A huge push is currently underway to recruit new Foster families and parents. There has been quite a fall away of foster families in recent years and the Council has sought to address this with improved financial and resource supports. **At DCC Full Council on December 4th last**, a report of the Director of Children’s and Young People’s Futures was presented, this set out Devon County Council’s commitment to foster carers, the context, importance and challenges and the practical steps to support fostering in Devon. It asked the Council to recognise that foster carers provide vital care, stability, and nurture for some of the most vulnerable children in our community and acknowledging the principle of corporate parenting.



Fostering in Devon: what do we need to do differently?



The report is well worth a read. It reflects the changes in demographics and the impact of the Covid years that has led to a significant decline in the availability of foster homes and the number of children in foster care. It has identified changes that need to be taken to improve the situation: see illustration.

Anyone interested in fostering should consider attending the introductory and interactive Fostering workshop on 20th March 2026. For further information contact: fosteringdevon.org.uk or call 0345 155 1077.

Link to report:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s53865/Devon%20County%20Council%20Foster%20Carer%20Commitment.pdf>

Devon’s Protected Landscapes project: Blackdown Hills National Landscape is one of eight landscapes in the £4.5 million Generation Green 2 programme, running from 2023 to 2025. This initiative has provided disadvantaged young people with meaningful opportunities to connect with nature.

Through activities such as day trips, overnight camps, wildlife surveys, and outdoor learning, the Blackdown Hills team helps foster environmental awareness, improve mental wellbeing, and inspire future green careers. By creating inclusive, engaging experiences in a protected landscape, the programme addresses barriers to access and promotes a deeper appreciation of the natural environment, ensuring that young people from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and involved. A further overnight stay is planned for Easter 2026. **Young People in Foster Care:** The Protected Landscape Teams are being trained by Children’s Services colleagues on working with young people in foster care, to give them the opportunity to get outside in beautiful places.

Totnes & District, Traffic & Transport Forum & AGM. Weds 28th January at 6.30pm in Totnes Guildhall. All adjacent Parish Councils are welcome to send a representative to attend this meeting.

Totnes Climate & Biodiversity Emergency – Green Projects Group: The next meeting will take place on Tuesday January 20th at The Climate Hub (The Mansion, Fore St., Totnes). The discussion will be plans for the South Hams Rally for Nature Festival (being supported by Sustainable South Hams).

Reminder – Warm Home Grants are available: link to grant information and applications:

<https://www.energysavingdevon.org.uk/help/warm-homes-local-grant/>