

**County & District Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026**  
**Devon County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington**  
**Cabinet Member for Climate & Biodiversity (incl. Public Transport)**  
**(division 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:**

**Local Government Reorganisation**  
 Have your say on the biggest changes to councils in half a century

**Click here to share your views by Midnight 26 March 2026**

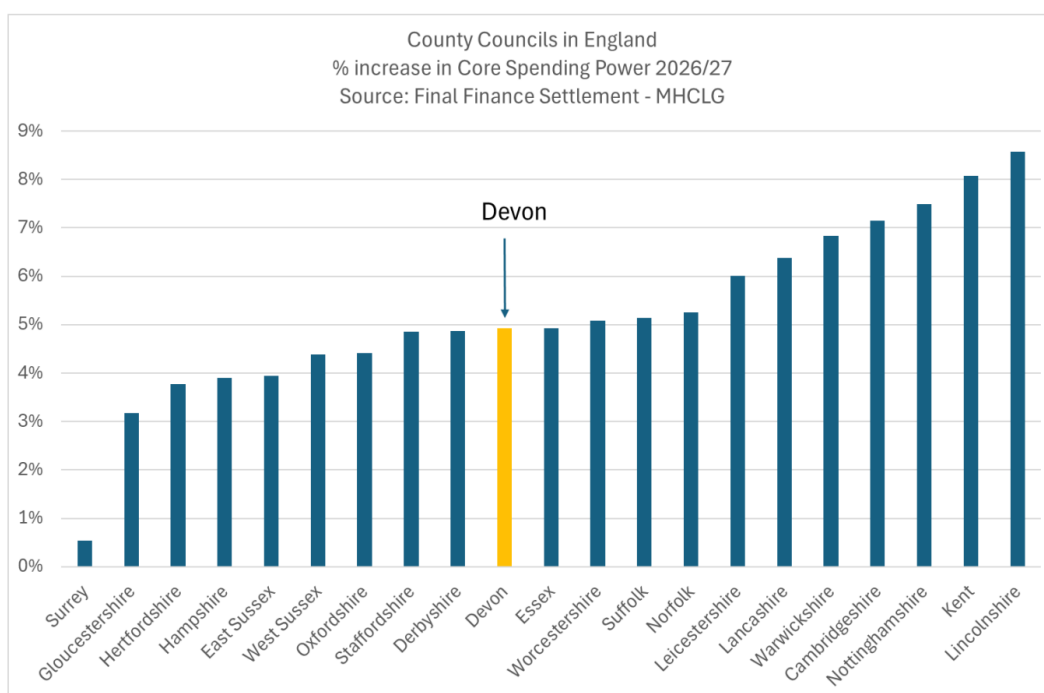
**Reminder: Public Consultation for Local Government Reform in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. This is the on-line link for information and to make a submission:**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-devon-plymouth-and-torbay/proposals-for-local-government-reorganisation-in-devon-plymouth-and-torbay>**

**government-reorganisation-in-devon-plymouth-and-torbay**

**The final Devon County Council Budget for 2026/27 was approved by Full Council on 24.02.26 (the table of service budgets was included in my February report). This confirmed the predicted 4.99% increase in Council Tax for 2026/27**

As anticipated, the final Government settlement for Core services for the forthcoming year was just 90% of the budget needed to maintain the 2025/26 service levels and will still require £38.98M of savings. The Government has failed to recognise Devon's rurality. This is how the allocation to Devon County Council compares to other Local Authorities:



**Notes to the budget:**

**A significant benefit in this year's settlement, is the 4-year capital agreement for transport and highways and 3-year revenue agreement for transport supports.** While these agreements show a year-on-year decline, this does provide certainty up to and across the Local Government Reform changes that are currently predicted to be implemented in 2028.

**Public Transport services are however due to be transferred from DCC to the new Devon & Torbay Combined Council on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2026.** The governance arrangements for the new Transport Authority are yet to be determined. This will mean that the public transport support element of the government funding will transfer too.

**An additional (and unexpected) unallocated £6.6M was also granted with the Core Funding from the government. This enabled the Cabinet to:**

- **Reinstate the otherwise proposed cut of £650,000 from this coming year's library budget (i.e. back to £7M) and set aside a further £1M reserve for libraries and rural hubs** to assist the transformation of the public library services, based on the outcome of the Libraries Unlimited public consultation currently underway.

In his speech to the budget at Cabinet, the portfolio holder Cllr Buczkowski made the following statement: *"Let me be clear. No libraries are closing. That has not been our intention. But the service, in its current financial model, is unsustainable, and has been for years. Doing nothing would be irresponsible and would undoubtedly lead to closures. The consultation on statutory hours is the first step in transformation, not contraction. Our vision is for vibrant, community-centred libraries operating as hubs for learning, connection and local services."*

- **Add a further £4M additional revenue funding for drainage, gully clearance, ditching, vegetation management and preventative works.**
- **plus an additional £500,000** to strengthen highways quality assurance, engagement, and communications.
- In addition to this **another £15 million additional capital in 2026–27 was allocated for targeted investment in preventative maintenance, resurfacing, patching and serviceability, alongside match-funding opportunities for towns and parishes, and will continue with a further £10 million per year across the remainder of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.**

**The full 2026/27 DCC budget report is at this link:**

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/b16889/Budget%20Book%202026%202027%2024th-Feb-2026%2011.00%20Council.pdf?T=9was>

**Rural Services Network Survey – How are Funding Cuts affecting Local Services?** Town and Parish Councils are invited to complete their short survey on local service impacts 2025/26. Link to survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RMTGServicesSurvey2025>

**Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) children's services** are being changed by new Government policies whereby they are investing in providing additional supports in schools to enable many SEND pupils to attend their local school. This will make a huge improvement in the lives of young people who will no longer need to travel long distances in lonely taxis to special schools. This new policy will not work for all SEND children. However, for the young people that it does suit, they will have the opportunity to make local friends and will also reduce the huge costs to local authorities. These policies are being implemented already in some Devon Schools.

**Changes to Bus services: Some mainly minor changes are being made to bus services across Devon that will take effect from April 5<sup>th</sup> '26.** The full list is attached as a separate sheet with this report.

**Locality Funding: The 2026/27 DCC Locality / Community funding budget for each Divisional Councillor has been increased from £8,000 to £10,000** for the forthcoming year. The fund will open for applications in May. Interested groups who wish to apply need to use this link for information and applications: [Search - Devon County Council](#)

**Peer Challenges at Devon County Council.** Over the second week of March, Devon County Council's senior leadership team of Officers, Cabinet Members and political leaders will be reviewed by a small team of senior officers and political leaders from other Local Authorities in England and Wales, put together by the

Local Government Association (LGA). This Peer group will interview and assess DCC's strategy and performance through a series of interviews with DCC's team of leaders and observed meetings. They will later return with their report and any recommendations for improvement. Generally, this is a very useful process for reflection and improvement of a Local Council's performance.

**Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (DASWC) & LGR.** This quarterly meeting (25.02.26) held an extended workshop for the County and District Council officers and Councillor representatives to discuss how plans could start being put into place to prepare for the anticipated shake up of public services including waste and recycling collections etc. There was broad agreement that whatever the new arrangement of LA's there should be a one Devon approach to waste services to enable better harmonisation and the economies of scale that could be realised for recycle collection and sales contracts. It was agreed to bring together data to allow comparisons of different waste systems including the use and recycling rates for separated kerbside collections and MRF (Material Recovery Facilities), currently used in Exeter (and more widely across the UK). This committee agreed to continue to work on this to ensure a smooth transfer of waste services across LGR.

**Restoring Stover Country Park Celebration – launch of projects 4/3/26.** It was a delight to attend and have the opportunity to visit all the various land and nature based projects and meet the volunteers. I planted 3 native trees on the day. *“Stover offers 114–125 acres of woodland, lakes, marshes, and heathland. Enjoy walking, cycling, birdwatching, a poetry trail, and historical sites in this scenic nature reserve.”* I highly recommend a visit to see the restoration carried out by the DCC team works and enjoy the wonderful natural spaces at Stover which is just off the A38 along the A382 towards Newton Abbott. The team host a number of regular activities and events: *(Remember to wear outdoor clothing and footwear).*

- View our photo exhibition in the Stover Centre
- Visit our community workshop
- Listen to a soundscape in the Roundhouse
- Grade II listed granite Gatehouse
- Experience the historic Stover estate
- Trail for all ages – head to the Centre to pick up your Trail sheets

. **More events and information at this link:** [Events 2026 - Stover Country Park](#)

## South Hams District Council Matters

**South Hams District Council's Executive** considering an agenda item at its meeting this Thursday morning (5 March) titled: *'Policy for the Transfer of Community Assets'* and would like to invite your Town/Parish Council to be represented at a Briefing Session on this issue. A Briefing has been arranged to be held (**remotely over MS Teams**) on **Thursday, 19 March from 5:45pm to 6:45pm** and, if you would like to attend this Briefing, please let Darryl White (Darryl.White@swdevon.gov.uk) know and he will forward the meeting Invitation accordingly.

**SHDC Locality / Community Funding for each Ward Councillor remains at £2,000 plus a further £2,000 for Climate & Biodiversity projects.** The fund will re-open for applications in May after the local elections. Interested groups who wish to apply need to use this link for information and applications: [Sustainable Communities Locality Fund | South Hams District Council](#)

**e.g. Dart Valley Cycle Trail** – through Dartington Estate and Riverford. I have agreed to help fund the Ecology assessment and report they need to pursue this project through my SHDC C&B grant funding.

## Local matters;

**Planning Application: 1821/25/VAR. Regarding the current development at St. Mary's, located at Broom Park, Dartington. This sought 6 access gates into the wildlife corridor,** yet to be planted on this site, citing the approval under appeal in 2025 for a single access gate. The appeal was dismissed and the report is interesting and very strong on the matter, in particular about the rationale for protecting the wildlife corridor. I attach the Inspector's report with my email.

**Bus stop at Shiners Bridge:** The bus stop which sits on the roundabout has been a matter of concern for some years. Parents are often in communication with me as there is no safe pedestrian route to reach the bus stop. There was an original S106 sum of £44,000 set aside under the Origins Planning approval for this to have works carried out that would enable a small bridge across directly over to the Shops at Dartington. However this was never delivered. I have received more requests from parents recently concerned about road safety particularly for students. I have raised this with officers at DCC for them to ask their design teams to consider this, as well at the bus operators. I also raised this at my meeting with Robbert Fedder, CEO at DHT last week. He was very agreeable to the idea of moving the bus stop to the car park for the shops. This would be very safe for pedestrian access to the buses. DCC officers and the bus company reps are considering this option now.

**Tree Felling at North Woods, Dartington.** Concerns have been expressed about potentially excessive trees being felled leading to wide clearances. This has been an enforcement matter raised with SHDC. DHT and the SHDC Tree Officer have reviewed the matter and have confirmed that this is within the approved and legal Forestry Commission agreements and felling schedule they have for these works on the commercial tree plantation. As a private body, albeit a charity, they have the right to do these works as long as they don't break the law. The legal position in terms of regulations around biodiversity and the moral case for supporting nature and wild spaces, in my view is questionable, but it seems that liability would be on the Forestry Commission. This year's felling has closed for the season, but perhaps some negotiations could ensue for the forthcoming felling programme to be more eco-friendly and wildlife conscious for the next season.

**Bridgetown Hill proposed pedestrian Crossing just below the junction with Blackpost lane:** This is on the list for consideration under next years' capital programme.

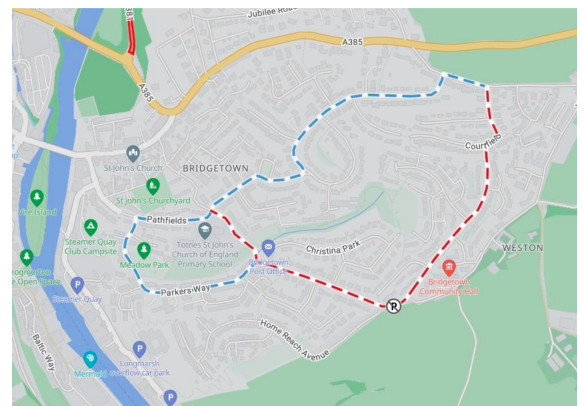
**20's Plenty – proposals for Totnes.** The agreed funded programme and the final map with routes to be included is currently with the design team at DCC and will be available asap.

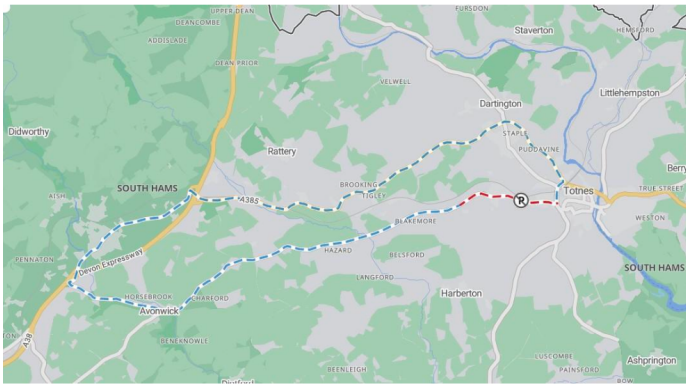
**Rail closures affecting Totnes Station:** Update from GWR: *"The line between Totnes and Plymouth reopened today (09.03.26) after 16 days of work on the railway bridge over the River Plym. The work included installing 134 steel rail supports between the bridge's existing beams and a further 24 new supports made from synthetic wood. These new supports are expected to last six times longer than the wooden ones they replaced. We've also refurbished the steelwork on the bridge deck. We took advantage of the closure to complete other work including replacing a track crossing near Ivybridge and 400 yards of rail near Newton Abbot. You can find more about the work [here](#). Thank you to everyone for their patience during this period."*

## Roadworks:

### Temporary Traffic Notice - WESTON LANE, DUKES ROAD & COURTFIELD., Berry Pomeroy

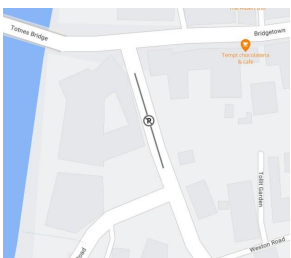
**(TTRO2668372). TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC & PARKING. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL** hereby give **NOTICE** that: From **MONDAY 3 AUGUST 2026** for a maximum of 5 days **FRIDAY 7 AUGUST 2026** (both dates inclusive) No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed or wait on the sections of Affected. Roads affected -**WESTON LANE, DUKES ROAD & COURTFIELD., TOTNES** The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - WESTON LANE, CULVERDALE, PARKERS WAY, PATHFIELDS, WESTONFIELDS, HIGHER WESTONFIELDS, BLACKPOST LANE, COURTFIELD. This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - **PATCHING WORKS. ROAD CLOSURE AND PARKING SUSPENSION. PARKING SUSPENSION: WESTON LANE (PATHFIELDS TO DUKE ROAD), DUKES ROAD (FULL LENGTH) & COURTFIELD (DUKES ROAD TO BLACKPOST LANE) – ALONG BOTH SIDES.** For additional information contact: **MILESTONE INFRASTRUCTURE** Telephone: **020 3307 8051**





**Temporary Traffic Notice - Dorsley Barton to Follaton Gate & Plymouth Road, Totnes (TTRO2668333). TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC & PARKING. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL** hereby give **NOTICE** that: From **MONDAY 27 JULY 2026** for a maximum of 5 days. **FRIDAY 31 JULY 2026** (both dates inclusive). No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed or wait on the sections of Affected. Roads affected - **DORSLEY BARTON TO FOLLATON GATE & PLYMOUTH ROAD, TOTNES & HARBERTON**. The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - **PLYMOUTH ROAD,**

**A381, A385, B3372, EXETER ROAD TO AVONWICK, OLD BRIDGE CROSS TO AVONWICK BRIDGE, NEW BRIDGE CROSS AT ZC43 TO CHARFORD CROSS ALONG ZC794, CHARFORD CROSS TO WONTONHILL CROSS ALONG ZC794, WONTONHILL CROSS TO WONTON CROSS, WONTON CROSS TO SHORTER CROSS ALONG ZC794, SHORTER CROSS TO BLUEPOST, BLUEPOST TO HAZARD, HAZARD CROSS TO FORK CROSS ALONG ZC794, FORK CROSS TO DORSLEY BARTON, DORSLEY BARTON TO FOLLATON GATE.** This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - **PATCHING. ROAD CLOSURE & PARKING SUSPENSION. PARKING SUSPENSION: PLYMOUTH ROAD – FULL LENGTH, BOTH SIDES.** For additional information contact: **MILESTONE INFRASTRUCTURE** Telephone: **020 3307 8051**



**Temporary Traffic Notice - SEYMOUR ROAD, Totnes (TTRO2668347). TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF PARKING. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL** hereby give **NOTICE** that: From **MONDAY 8 JUNE 2026** for a maximum of 5 days **FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2026** (both dates inclusive). No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to park or wait on the sections of Affected Roads affected - **SEYMOUR ROAD, TOTNES 1 SEYMOUR ROAD TO 41 SEYMOUR ROAD** This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - **RENEW STOP TAP** For additional information contact: **SOUTH WEST WATER** Telephone: **03443462020**

**10.03.26 OPENREACH:** The huge Congestion that took place in Totnes this week; that led to almost gridlock across the town and A385 was due to an urgent repair to an Openreach road access cover on Station Road on the bridge. When I called the DCC Neighbourhood Highways team at 3.30pm, I discovered that the 4 way traffic lights management that had been in the place for the day was installed without any reference or notification to DCC Highways. A complaint has been raised.

### **Extreme Weather and resilience in local areas:**

**Devon Communities Together (DCT) have been assisting Local Town and Parish Councils for some years now to create their local Emergency Plan.** This is the link to DCT's website about resilience planning, Devon Community Resilience Forum and grant funding than can be accessed to assist with creating Emergency Plans: <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/projects/devon-community-resilience-forum>

**Staverton Parish Council have worked on their Emergency Plan** which they are happy for other parish councils to use for ideas; this is available on their Parish Council website: <https://www.stavertondevon-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/95/2026/02/Staverton-Parish-Emergency-Plan-REDACTED-2.pdf>

**LIFEHOUSE; Emergency Planning Meetings for Totnes and wider Environ:** Further to the well-attended meeting in February where there were presentations from Devon Communities Together and Devon County Council Flood team, a follow up meeting has been arranged by the LifeHouse group in Totnes to discuss these issues. This meeting will focus on emotional resilience. **Tues 24<sup>th</sup> March @ Totnes Methodist Church @ 7pm**

**News from the Met Offices: New study identifies warning signs for extreme flash flooding;** Climate experts have identified an atmospheric configuration that can release huge volumes of water in a matter of minutes. Link:

<https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.metoffice.gov.uk%2Fabout-us%2Fnews-and-media%2Fmedia-centre%2Fweather-and-climate-news%2F2026%2Fwarning-signs-for-extreme-flash>

[flooding/1/0101019c28ed63f0-034a222f-6cef-4a18-aeac-3b2121cecb21-000000/pG39q2RUEp7k-ISQ69Rs9EaxDji8gGP7kdbm1esDXUg=443>](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/why-rural-youth-work-matters-a-decade-of-traye-tickets-1981575155633?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl)

**TRAYE (Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement) project – diary dates;**

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April '26; TRAYE Youth Conference at Stover Country Park (Newton Abbott, TQ12 6QG). 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration conference & launch of Call of Nature Poetry Challenge** for young people. All parish councils participating in TRAYE project are invited to send a representative with a free place. Additional Councillors and representatives will need to purchase a ticket.

As TRAYE celebrates its 10-year anniversary, this conference offers an opportunity to reflect on the impact of rural youth work across our nine participating towns and parishes and to look ahead to how we can continue strengthening support for young people in South Devon. The event will include

- Key speakers from the field of youth work
- Young people sharing their journeys and lived experiences
- An interactive Q&A panel discussion
- Opportunities for networking and partnership conversations
- A locally prepared lunch (vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options available)
- An outdoor session with the Stover Rangers exploring the beautiful Stover Country Park
- An outdoor poetry workshop for the young people

**TICKETS:** Parents, carers and young people are entitled to free tickets  
Partner organisations, educational services and our funders are entitled to one free ticket each.

All proceeds from ticket sales will go directly towards supporting our youth clubs and young people. Tickets can be purchased from Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/why-rural-youth-work-matters-a-decade-of-traye-tickets-1981575155633?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>

**We would be delighted if you can join us for what promises to be an inspiring and meaningful day.**

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July'26 TRAYE AGM at Staverton Court House 10am – 1pm** All parish councils participating in TRAYE project are invited to send 2 representatives.

**GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN:** “The Great British Spring Clean is Britain's **biggest** mass-participation environmental campaign, and the Great Big School Clean is our schools arm that runs alongside it. It's an opportunity for volunteers, businesses, local authorities and community partners to come together to care for their local environment. Since it began in 2016, millions of Litter Heroes have picked more than **4.5 million** bags of litter! The 2026 campaign runs from **13 to 29 March**. <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/join-local-authority>

**LOVE PARKS WEEK** Webinar: “Last year, Love Parks Week reached millions of people, highlighting the essential role our parks – and the people who care for them - play in community health and local biodiversity. This year, we want to go even further. Join us on **Wednesday 25 March** at 10am and **kickstart your preparations for Love Parks Week 2026**. You'll get early access to the 2026 campaign resources you need to engage your local community, including:

**The 2026 resource Pack**

- The 2026 resource pack: Your toolkit of posters, social media assets and PR templates.
- National recognition: How to get your events on our interactive map.
- Collective impact: A quick look at 2025's results and why your participation matters.
- Event inspiration: Real-world ideas from other parks to spark your own plans.

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/01b827be-c895-402a-b01b-611571182425@31f108ed-73ce-4693-9d61-3572ccce5518>

**Citizens Assemblies:** are taking place in the Totnes area. You can find them and follow them on this Instagram account. <https://www.instagram.com/totnesassembly/>

**Inclusive Totnes:** host monthly meeting to work together for improvements to road safety and improved safe access for people with visible and invisible disabilities.

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/01b827be-c895-402a-b01b-611571182425@31f108ed-73ce-4693-9d61-3572ccce5518>

**Next week is Village Halls Week**, below is funding to support improvements to rural community buildings. The Village Halls Small Grants Fund, delivered by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and funded by Defra, will support small capital improvements to rural community buildings that improve accessibility, sustainability, and community use. Village halls across England can apply for grants of between £2,000 and £5,000 to improve and modernise their facilities. This might include:

- boiler replacements
- insulation
- toilet upgrades
- new kitchens

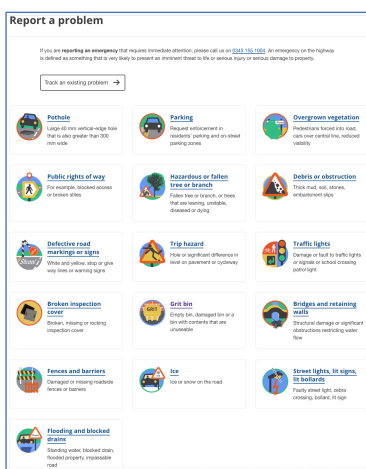
**Activities** should seek to achieve one or more of the following outcomes for their communities:

- Improved health &/or wellbeing &/or reduction in rural loneliness
- positive impact on the local environment, contributes towards net zero
- support for the local rural economy
- promotion of community cohesion

No deadline: More Information: [Village halls small grants fund - ACRE](#)

## REMINDERS

**Highways issues and defects 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 **DCC 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/>

**Warm Home Grants are available:** link to grant information and applications: <https://www.energysavingdevon.org.uk/help/warm-homes-local-grant/>