

## **County Council Report – May 2026**

### **Tiverton West division**

I thought it may be useful for all to remind you of the scope of Tiverton West which runs from Bickleigh Bridge (yes, it's in this division) out to Withleigh and up to Shillingford and back down to Tiverton. It's not always clear-cut which areas are in it, with only half of Chettiscombe, for example. I'm keen that our two towns and five parishes work closely together to identify priorities for the future, and will soon be arranging a round table where reps from each council can meet and share ideas (if there's an appetite). Watch this space.



### **Libraries:**

We were really pleased to successfully receive grant funding from central government to support modernisation of many of our libraries. The £200k from central government was match funded with £100k from DCC and £100k from Libraries Unlimited

### [Funding awarded to upgrade technology in Devon's Libraries - News](#)

The results of the extensive library consultation are currently being considered and a report will be going to cabinet 21<sup>st</sup> May where decisions will be made on the future of the service.

### **Train 4 Tomorrow:**

More funding has been secured to deliver skills bootcamps across Devon. This opens up fantastic opportunities for people looking to upskill or change career. Please do spread the word. [Extra funding will help more adults access Train4Tomorrow Skills Bootcamps - News](#)

### **Highways:**

The winter issues have now settled and I've been out across the division with the NHO. We have been looking directly at issues on the ground, including drainage, potholes, road closures and wider pressures on the road network. You may have seen some of our crews working night shifts. I'm pushing hard for town and parish councils to adopt a Road Warden, because not only can they fix immediate issues they, as well as councillors and residents, often know exactly where problems occur repeatedly, and combining that knowledge with officer expertise allows us to target work far more effectively. Potholes are still a mammoth task - 3188 'defects' were completed across all 58 divisions in Devon in the first 25 days of April.

### **Local councillor grants:**

Our locality budget is being increased to £10,000 this year which is great news for local communities – applications are open from mid May. Please get in touch if there is a project or organisation which you feel could benefit from some funding. For transparency this is how the full £8000 was spent in the past year.

**Adventure Therapy** Outdoor activities for children and young people with complex needs £200.00

**Allies Middevon** Bench for West Exe Recreation Park £300.00

**Bampton Primary PTFA** Web awareness and internet safety learning sessions at 2 schools – Bampton and Heathcoat £598.00

**BOUNCE! Brighter Futures Foundation** Towards professional therapy sessions for families in need £800.00

**Churches Housing Action Team** Saturday morning sessions for advice and access to the foodbank £800.00

**Churches Housing Action Team LTD** Food top-up for a foodbank £59.00

**Home-Start Exeter, East & Mid Devon** Support for delivery of volunteer home-visiting and group support to vulnerable young families £500.00

**Involve Voluntary Action in Mid Devon** Laptop and mobile phone for a new Community Builder £800.00

**Phoenix Rising CIC** Online course for survivors of abuse £100.00

**Rekindle Recovery CIC** Towards costs of a drop-in recovery service £500.00

**SOUTH WEST BLOOD BIKES** In support of the volunteer Blood Bike service £100.00

**Space Youth Services** Replacement furniture and flooring for a chill out room £1,000.00

**Sustainable Tiverton** Sewing and craft skills workshops using recycled materials £500.00

**Tiverton Library (part of Libraries Unlimited)** The purchase furniture for our teenage and children's areas in the library £593.00

**Uplift (Devon)** Towards the costs of family advice workshops £350.00

**Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon Development Trust** Towards a publication drawn from the mass observation 1937 – 1945 £100.00

**Friends of Tiverton Town Leat** Clearance and repairs of existing Gullies and Culverts £500.00

I am also pleased to say the Places to Go Things to Do youth grant is reopening with £160,000 available in the form of small grants to support groups and activities for young people aged 11-25.

[Almost £400,000 went to community projects, local events and good causes last year - News](#)

### **Unitary authority**

Any announcement from the Government on unitary authorities has been pushed back and is likely to be in July. This is intended to be followed by a consultation, and a decision in the Autumn. Elections for a 'shadow unitary council' are slated for May 2027 with vestment a year later. This affects us all – and the decision could have a huge impact on any authority's ability to provide (especially) effective adult care and children's services. A reminder that decisions by Steve Reed in March seem to favour smaller, "place-based" unitary councils – with areas like Greater Essex and Hampshire each having 5 unitaries, Norfolk and Suffolk with three each. He said decisions were taken 'on a case-by-case basis, on [their] own merits'. This is a significant move away from the Government's supposed plan and reports on savings, which suggested new unitary authorities in England would have a minimum population of 500,000.

### **The Tivvy whiff**

Whatever you call it, residents are being affected by the smell attributed to the sewage treatment plant at Collipriest. Ashley and West Exe residents are most affected, but town and parish councillors across my division tell me they have experienced it when in Tiverton. Cllr Stirling and I felt we were being 'fobbed off' by South West Water and I called for a public meeting, which was well attended and we not only have some fresh evidence but an action plan to take to South West Water. They declined the invitation(s) to attend. Any issues with the smell can be reported at <https://tivertonsmell.info>.

### **Let's Talk Safer Families**

The first live online sessions of the year for parents, carers and families are designed to give practical advice and support on some of the issues many families face but do not always find easy to discuss. The first three sessions are Understanding your teenager on 5 May, Community Risks on 12 May, and Family life on 17 May, all at 7pm. Full details and booking information are available at [www.letstalksaferfamilies.org](http://www.letstalksaferfamilies.org)

### **Aerosols at Paradise Woods**

A large number of deodorant aerosols were dumped in the Lowman and snared in the water by a manmade dam in Paradise Woods. I attended in my capacity as councillor advocate for policing

with an MDDC enforcement officer and both issues have been reported to the environment agency. The source is not known but I'm also liaising with the local police around the risk/dangers to young people around anti-social behaviour and drug taking in this area.

### **Civic Celebration**

I was pleased to attend the Chair of Devon County Council's Civic Celebration in South Molton on Sunday 26th April – alongside many dignatories including Tiverton's Mayor. (I hasten to add I was not a dignatory!) The event was a celebration of all things Devon, with a particular focus on poetry, music and song. The South Molton Town Band were excellent, and it was especially encouraging to see so many young people performing and showcasing their talents.