

Ordinary Meeting of Harberton Parish Council
Tuesday 13th May 2025

13. Correspondence

- 13.1. E-Circulars for information Cllrs are informed that the Clerk receives the following regular e-circulars, that can be forwarded on request: Citizens Advice South Hams, Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency, Devon Communities Together, Devon County Council Community News Round-up, Devon Home Choice, Emergency Planning newsletter, Friends of the Dart, Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement (GLEAM), Harberton Village Email, Healthwatch Devon, Information Commissioners Office, National Association of Local Councils Events newsletter, One Devon NHS Integrated Care Board, Parish Online, Rural Services Network, SLCC Membership, South Hams Society.
- 13.2. Items of correspondence for information
- 13.2.1. 20250507 DALC #20 2025 E-bulletin Cllrs are informed that this e-bulletin includes a blog from the Chair of Devon Association of Local Councils commenting on the 70+ pen portraits received from members, forming the basis of a draft Position Statement that DALC is preparing for all Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) stakeholders. It summarises what councils do for their communities and some of their aspirations for the future with LGR. The draft statement has been shared with cllrs for interest.
- 13.3. Items of correspondence for consideration
- 13.4. 20250418 Harbertonford Bus Shelter Cllrs are informed that the ex-Parish Councillor who, with her partner, have voluntarily looked after the Harbertonford bus shelter for many years no longer feel that they can carry on and would like to hand the responsibility back to the Council. During the time that they looked after the bus shelter it was decorated four times, but hasn't had a refresh in four years and is again in need of some TLC. A roof slate has come off (held down at the car park side of the building), a roofing support post is missing and the rear gutter is again detached from the down pipe. Several other areas could do with attention as well, and it does now need redecorating. The correspondent also has been asked to contact the Parish Council about a second matter: the large overgrowth of ivy on the west bridge wall, which is occluding vision from the Kingsbridge direction for drivers exiting Woodland Road. The overhang is also forcing pedestrians on the pavement to use the outer strip along the roadside, which is hazardous with the amount of large vehicles negotiating the narrow bridge.
- 13.5. 20250428 DALC Spring 2025 Training & Events Cllrs are informed that this news bulletin focuses on training opportunities available through the Devon Association of Local Councils. A new cycle of the 'Being a Good Councillor' courses started again on 6th May, should any councillors wish to book a place. A 'Councillor Development Framework' has been launched, to help cllrs find the right course for them depending on their experience, the committees they sit on the and roles they play in the council. A link can be provided should cllrs be interest in looking at this. 'In House' training is also being offered to councils, to support a range of topics, from helping Councils to develop their vision and values, to understanding conflict, understanding personality types, developing communication skills etc.

DALC Position Statement May 2025

Some of what you need to know about towns and parishes in the face of Local Government Reorganisation.

Over the last couple of months DALC has engaged with its members to find out their views and concerns regarding LGR. As part of this, councils were invited to send in pen portraits of their councils and communities. The information gained has contributed to this paper.

1 All towns and parishes:

- care passionately about their communities
- know their communities inside and out
- are proud of their communities and their identities
- prioritise the needs of their communities

2 Local council finance and functions

Altogether, Devon local councils precept for £25,000,000 approx. to enable them to carry out their functions and invest in their communities. This is local delivery that contributes to the resilience, well-being and quality of life for residents across the county.

All towns and parishes:

- **make decisions** on behalf of their communities
- **consult and represent** the views of their residents to other authorities
- **provide localised decision making** accountable to their electorate
- **inform** residents about matters that do or could affect them
- **identify and deliver appropriate services** according to local need
- **keep their public areas** and streets clean and tidy
- **maintain property** that they own
- **work in partnership** with other organisations in their communities
- **lead on national and local celebrations** that develop community relationships and strengthen cohesion e.g. the Jubilee, the Coronation, VE Day, May Fairs, Beating the Bounds, etc.
- **grant fund** community groups and organisations

This is the baseline picture. All parishes carry out these functions. Many do much more, including some or all of these: housing provision, buying, developing and managing community buildings and facilities such as cinemas and museums; land management;

delivering regular community events, providing youth services; preparing Emergency Plans and Neighbourhood Plans

3 Local councils' principal concerns are:

- **The condition of local roads** – the degraded surfaces; the speed of traffic; the unsuitability of local roads for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders
- **Their unheard voice** in planning matters
- **The lack of housing supply** including choice and availability for local people
- **The reduction of services** from other authorities, e.g. public transport, public toilets, verge cutting
- **The difficulties of co-operative working** with other authorities
- **The lack of seriousness** with which the work of towns and parishes is regarded

These concerns are shared across the county by large and small parishes.

4 Local council aspirations for their communities include:

- **Taking on and managing more assets** locally for efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
- **Engaging** even more closely with their communities
- **Communicating** even more effectively with their residents
- **Delivering neglected services** their communities want such as youth provision
- **Combatting rural isolation**
- **Initiating and collaborating** with measures to support health and well-being, safer communities and sustainability
- **Developing partnerships** to retain and reinforce town centres
- **Addressing the climate and ecological emergency** by changing practices, developing projects and collaborating with community groups

5 Local councils aspire to achieve with other authorities in the local government sector both now and in the future:

- an effective working relationship
- to be taken seriously
- to have their views invited and listened to
- to be seen as capable and valued partners
- to operate on principles of cooperation, dialogue and respect
- the recognition of their community's unique identity

6. Local councils and Local Government Reorganisation

Many councils are willing to take on assets and provide local services to their communities which might otherwise be lost under LGR.

Some smaller parishes currently rely on delivery for some services from their district and the county council. If these arrangements are going to change under a new unitary authority, they need to know.

Some district councils have started to engage with town councils on asset transfer. However, our sector cannot be regarded as a handy drop off point for loss-making assets and services.

The sector needs to know what statutory services any new unitary will provide under any proposal and what that will look like in practice.

The sector needs to know what the vision is for town and parish engagement under any unitary proposal.

The town and parish sector must be included in the discussions on arrangements for future engagement, cooperation and collaboration with any proposed unitary.

LGR is an opportunity to deliver effective localism, with Devon's communities determining the services they need and a locally accountable and accessible body to deliver them. DALC supports the establishment of new parish councils in areas which are currently unparished, and can offer advice on this process.

DALC will not support any specific proposal for LGR unless it is clearly the view of towns and parishes in our membership but it will use the evidence coming from members and continue to work with members to identify the extent to which any proposals meet the aspirations of towns and parishes to play an effective as opposed to side-lined role in local government.

We prefer to see proposals that set out clearly the way in which towns and parishes will not only be included in discussions but also be seen as a crucial conduit for conveying community messages to unitary and public sector delivery structures on services provision and design and to be actively used to convey messages back to the community. This implies a need for appropriate mechanisms to be built into any network or partnership proposals. For example, there could be clear consultation and involvement methods resourced with simple accessible structures, in which the local council sector is seen as the natural partner in innovation, initiation and monitoring of services to communities and be engaged with the unitary as a key partner in achieving them.