

Consultation launched on transport plan for Devon and Torbay

People across Devon are being invited to have their say on future plans for transport in the county.

[A public consultation has been launched](#) this week on the [Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 4 \(LTP4\)](#) which sets out the transport priorities across the county between 2025 and 2040.

The full draft document of the plan is available to view on the [Have Your Say webpage](#). The deadline for completing the online questionnaire is 11:59pm on Saturday 30 November.

The plan's vision is for well-integrated and accessible transport to facilitate sustainable growth, support net zero carbon targets by 2050 at the latest, improve travel choices and benefit people's health and wellbeing.

You can [read more about the consultation in the story on our news page](#).

Find out more about becoming a councillor

Devon County Council will hold elections next May, and right now, we're encouraging people to consider becoming a candidate.

We've launched a campaign to raise awareness of the opportunity to help improve the lives of people in Devon.

It's important for the council to be diverse and representative, with councillors from a variety of backgrounds who can bring their wide ranging experiences to the heart of the decision-making process.

We've published a special edition of this newsletter, with lots of information about being a councillor, to give you an idea about the role, what it involves, and who can be one. If you missed it, [you can read it online](#).

We're also holding two information sessions that anyone can attend, in person or online, to give people the chance to get an insight into the life of an elected member.

Our County Returning Officer, Maria Price, and officers from our Democratic Services team will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about the role.

Promoting mentally healthy workplaces this World Mental Health Day

The [international focus this year is mental health in the work place](#).

Work can be good for our mental health, but it can also be a source of stress and anxiety.

The [Mental Health Foundation's guide](#) describes how we can help our own mental health at work, as well as the mental health of our colleagues.

Making time for mental wellbeing and self-care is important.

The [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) are simple steps you can take to feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

- Connect - good relationships and connecting with others are important to build a sense of belonging and to share positive experiences
- Be active – being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness – it can also boost your mood
- Learn - learning new skills and doing new things can boost self-confidence and help build a sense of purpose
- Give - acts of giving and kindness can help to create positive feelings, a sense of reward and self-worth
- Notice - paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing

You can [read more about mental wellbeing, as well as where to get support and advice, in the full story on our news page.](#)

Additional SEND spaces at Braunton Academy's new English block

Our Vice Chair, Councillor Pru Maskell, has officially opened Braunton Academy's new English block.

The new block was delivered following our investment of £4million of capital funding.

Pru, a former pupil of what is now Braunton Academy was joined by author Joseph Elliot in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The new block includes changing rooms, two computer rooms, a multi-purpose classroom, three new SEND spaces, a dedicated teacher training space and meeting rooms to enable staff to meet with parents.

Members of the Braunton Partnership, Trustees, other representatives from the council and the teams that were involved in the project joined the school council students and Year 11 student leaders to celebrate this occasion.

Read more in the [story on our news page.](#)

New pilot service launched to reduce drug-related deaths

Local pharmacies are working with Public Health Devon to pilot a new service aiming to reduce the number of drug-related deaths in the county.

The latest figures show that there were 185 drug-related deaths in Devon from 2020 to 2022.

We already fund a range of initiatives that help prevent harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs.

But now we're also looking to work with a number of high street pharmacies in specific locations to help prevent deaths caused by overdose of illegal opiates, such as heroin.

The new pilot will begin with the following pharmacies:

- Exeter Community Pharmacy, St.Sidwell Street, Exeter, EX4 6NS
- ASDA Clovelly Road, Bideford, EX39 3QU
- ASDA, Highweek Street, Newton Abbot, TQ12 ITG
- Well Pharmacy Teignmouth, 9 Regent Street, TQ14 8SJ
- Day Lewis, Pines Pharmacy, 39 Pines Road, Exmouth, EX8 5NH

You can [read more in the story on our news page.](#)

Primary school children get wise about farming

More than 1,600 primary school children from across Devon got 'Farmwise' and saw for themselves where our food comes from and how it's made.

We invited Key Stage 2 primary school children from 40 primary schools, and they rolled up their sleeves and got stuck into a range of activities.

It's the 11th time this annual event has been held and teachers and children tell us it's the absolute highlight of their year.

The event is a collaboration between us, South West Norse, Devon County Agricultural Association, and Mole Valley Farmers and takes place at Westpoint.

Farmwise offers children a 'beyond the classroom experience' with the chance to engage in a multitude of sensory activities and experiences offered by a mix of producers and farmers, including tenant farmers from our Farms Estate.

You can read more about Trevor from the 'Sheep Show', the 'burping cows' exhibit, and chicks that hatched just a few hours before the Farmwise doors opened, [in the full story on our news website.](#)

New funds confirmed to help households with the costs of energy and food

The government has announced further household support funding until the end of March 2025 to help households that are struggling with the costs of energy, food, water and other essentials. Our allocation this time is a little over £5 million.

Citizens Advice Devon will receive some of the funding so that they can continue to support people who are struggling with energy costs.

The Devon Community Foundation will receive some of the funding so that they can continue to provide grants to community groups who in turn, support people who might not otherwise be eligible for other support.

The allocation means we'll be able to continue providing help with food bills during the school holidays to families whose children receive benefits-related free school meals during term time.

We're working with district, borough and city councils to ensure that pensioners and households receiving welfare benefits will have access to the funding.

Early Help professionals, who work closely with families who need support, will be able to make referrals to the fund.

And we'll be helping care leavers with financial support towards their energy and food costs.

Find out more in the [story on our news page](#).

Therapeutic Wellbeing Service for care leavers

A new team to help our care experienced young people to navigate the mental health system has launched.

The Therapeutic Wellbeing Service for care leavers will support access to existing mental health services, identify gaps in provision, and advocate for young people in strategic meetings. It will also be able to offer some therapeutic support.

Care experienced young people had told us that they sometimes find the complexity of the mental health system challenging to navigate, which meant that young people couldn't always access support and services they needed. The new team will work with care experienced young people to help them get the help they need.

Young people were involved with the recruitment of the Therapeutic Wellbeing Practitioners and have helped influence what the new service looks like.

You can [read more in the story on our news page](#).

Look out for each other on Devon's roads

As British Summer Time ends and the clocks going back on Sunday 27 October, we're reminding all road users to take extra care over the autumn and winter months. With fewer daylight hours and visibility often affected by poor weather conditions, everyone is being encouraged to "look out for one another" on Devon's roads.

Drivers are asked to look out for more vulnerable road users and to give them plenty of time and space.

Cyclists, motorcyclists, and horse riders are all encouraged to "be bright, be seen", by wearing reflective and fluorescent clothing to ensure they can be seen clearly.

Pedestrians walking in areas where it is dark or where there are no footways are also encouraged to wear clothing that will make them more visible.

[Read the full story on the news page of our website.](#)

Devon's recycling rate increases

Devon has maintained its position as having the second highest recycling rate in the country!

Figures show that recycling rates in Devon were 54.5 per cent during 2023/24, an increase of 0.5 per cent on the previous year. This includes both kerbside collections as well as items people bring to our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Additionally, new figures show that 78.7 per cent of items brought to HWRCs are recycled. We've also seen a reduction in the amount of household waste being sent to landfill from 3.4 per cent to 1.3 per cent in 2023/24.

[Read the full story on the news page of our website.](#)

Grants available to help food insecurity

Devon Community Foundation is inviting community organisations that are involved with food support to register for grants now available.

Working in partnership with us, the Foundation is offering grants of up to £30,000 to help organisations to address food insecurity in Devon.

The two-year core grants will be used to develop projects which improve people's access to affordable, nutritious food, such as food clubs, social supermarkets or community kitchens, to be delivered from community hubs and/or schools.

Interested organisations need to register with an initial expression of interest by Thursday 7 November, after which some will be invited to submit a full application.

[Visit the Devon Community Foundation website for more information.](#)

World Menopause Day

Discussing menopause can feel challenging but it's important to help reduce the taboo and make it a more comfortable subject.

We may all be affected by the menopause in some way, whether it's impacting on your own health and wellbeing, a family member, a friend or a colleague. So for everyone, understanding the basics around what the menopause is, its key symptoms, and some helpful ways to manage it can help them to become more equipped to offer empathy and support.

[Visit the NHS website](#) to find out more about the symptoms of menopause and perimenopause and the things you can do to help as well as what treatment and support is available.

Do you support communities to connect with nature?

Join the Wild About Devon forum for a day of networking, sharing ideas and learning about some fantastic work taking place across Devon.

This free event is a great opportunity to get to know other people who are working professionally to support community action around wildlife or who voluntarily lead this work in their community, and to explore your own work in a supportive space.

Please email bridie.devonnature@gmail.com if you would be interested in speaking about your project, running a workshop or displaying information.

Wild About Devon is a platform for those connecting communities with nature, with the forum and steering group including key wildlife, nature and community organisations from across the county. Find out more at the [Wild About Devon website](#) or join their [friendly Facebook community](#).

Grants available to community groups that support people with the cost of living

[Devon Communities Foundation](#) is working with us again to distribute grants from the Household Support Fund.

Two hundred thousand pounds in funding is available for community groups working with households that find it difficult to access support elsewhere. The funding is aimed at alleviating immediate needs and helping those who are struggling to afford food, energy bills, and other related essentials.

The grants are targeted, acknowledging that some members of our community are under-served by other support programmes and are therefore likely to be impacted more severely by the cost of living crisis.

The Foundation is inviting applications from organisations whose work supports priority groups who are not accessing support through other channels. These priority groups are:

- minority ethnic communities and/or
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and/or
- people experiencing homelessness and those in temporary or insecure housing and/or
- households which include people with a disability, or those suffering ill-health which has a direct impact on household income and an ability to meet food and energy bills

Large grants, up to the value of £20,000, and small grants of up to £5,000 are available. All grants must be fully committed by Monday 31 March 2025 and fully spent by Wednesday 30 April 2025. [More information about the fund and making an application is available on the Devon Communities Foundation website.](#)

National Adoption Week highlights adoption journeys of all kinds

To raise awareness, we've been celebrating the diversity of adoptive families, to show that the journey to a family isn't always a traditional one.

Families come in all shapes and sizes, so perhaps there's no such thing as a 'normal' family these days.

[Adopt South West's](#) latest campaign features a new short film set onboard a train, following the stories of three adoptive families on their travels. Just like adoption, trains connect people to one another and act as a fitting metaphor for the adoption journey.

With fewer people coming forward to adopt, children can face delays finding their forever home. Across the south west, there has been a 22 per cent increase in the number of children with a plan for adoption who are not yet matched with an adoptive family. Right now, there are more children yet to be placed, than there are approved adopters waiting to be matched with a child.

[Read more and watch the video in the story on our news page.](#)