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## THANK YOU

Having been elected as your Devon County Councillor for the Salcombe Division, I have had an amazing first 12 months.

Here is my first 'Annual Report' which I am presenting at the Annual Parish Meetings for the 16 parishes and town councils that I represent.

The title of these reports is 'The Same Page' and I very much hope that we are indeed on the 'same page'. It is vital that we all work together to improve the provision of services for our local communities.

I am very grateful to all those who have supported my best endeavours to do what is possible, under very difficult circumstances.

Our county councils across the country have never been in a worse place financially. We are all struggling to provide even statutory services to the standard that we have been able to in the past.

I have come to this post with fresh eyes, no vested interests and considerable business experience. I take nothing at face value. However I have an open mind and am grateful to all DCC Officers and experienced Elected Members who have enabled me to find a way forward for Salcombe Division.

Thank you to parish and town councils who have recognised this and joined forces to improve the lot of our communities.

Cllr Louise Wainwright  
Salcombe Division.

April 2026



My first visit to the Council Chamber May 2025. Seen here with Liberal Democrat colleagues, Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin (Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs and Broadband) and Cllr Ed Tyldesley (Chumleigh and Landkey)



@ Louise4Devon

**Salcombe Division:** Aveton Gifford, Bigbury, Buckland-tout-Saints, Churchstow, Halwell & Moreleigh, Kingston, Loddiswell, Malborough, Ringmore, Salcombe, South Huish, South Milton, Thurlestone, West Alvington and Woodleigh.



## COLLABORATION

During my first 12 months as your Devon County Councillor, I have encouraged inter-parish collaboration because I believe that local democracy is best ensured this way as we move to the single Unitary Authority. Collaboration seems crucial when under-funding of services for coastal and rural parishes is at an all-time low.

This is what I have done:

1. Showcased the **Neighbourhood Plans** of all parishes and town councils on my website **www.Louise4Devon.com** together with the parish council websites to make it easier for parish councils to compare plans.
2. Provided detailed **Carbon Footprints** of all 16 parish and town councils from the Impact Community Carbon Calculator (<https://impact-tool.org.uk/>) with links to the full reports. Many of our parish and town councils have already **Declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency** and are taking steps to encourage their local communities to act together. Their endeavours will be showcased on [www.Louise4Devon.com](http://www.Louise4Devon.com). This may enable neighbouring parishes to collaborate to ensure connected wildlife corridors for example or host shared Energy Assemblies etc.
3. Devised the first **Salcombe Division Assembly** on 29th November 2025, with Cllr Paul Arnott (DCC Cabinet Member for Local Govt. Reorganisation) – hosted by **Salcombe Town Council**. This was the first time that parish and town councils have met to discuss the common issues of local democracy and the role of **Neighbourhood Area Committees** once the new **Unitary Authority** is vested (from May 2028). Whichever, boundary change is decided (July 2026), I anticipate that there might be a few **'pilot' Neighbourhood Area Committees** set up soon after the Unitary Elections (May 2028). I would like Salcombe Division to have begun the process of local collaboration in advance of May 2028, to give us the chance that Salcombe Division might be part of any possible future pilot.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

How I keep informed and in touch.

- Attend many of the monthly parish and town council meetings.
- Meet with parishioners, parish councillors, and organisations with specific problems.
- Respond to hundreds of emails to **louise.wainwright@devon.gov.uk**
- Regularly post information on Facebook **@louise4devon**
- Publish information on website **www.Louise4Devon.com**
- Escalate concerns to Devon County Council as needed via the DCC **Members Portal**.
- Seek advice from DCC Councillor colleagues and Officers as needed

## COLLABORATION (cont)

4. Devised the **Gas Emergency De-brief** on 13th March from senior executives of Wales & West Utilities, Devon Local Resilience Forum, South Hams District Council and Devon Communities Together, hosted by Malborough Parish Council. I am promoting the writing and updating of Emergency Plans for all 16 parish and town councils and used the opportunity of the real life 'Gas Emergency' in our Division (Jan 2026) to illustrate the way in which local parish Emergency teams coordinate with the higher-level teams and identify the gaps in local knowledge that need to be plugged. Knowledge of the key-holders of properties without full time residents was one of the priorities.

5. Devised the **second Salcombe Division Assembly** on 28th March 2026, which was addressed by Cllr Theo Butt Thomas (Lead Member for Transformation, Human Resources and Localities at Somerset County Council) – hosted by Modbury Parish Council.

6. Organised the **Highways Assembly** (6th May 2026) – see section on 'Highways'.



## UNITARY TIMETABLE

**Summer 2026** (expected June/July): Secretary of State announces final decision on which proposal to implement.

**Autumn 2026:** Legislation expected to be laid in Parliament to create the new council(s).

**May 2027:** Elections held to the new unitary council(s).

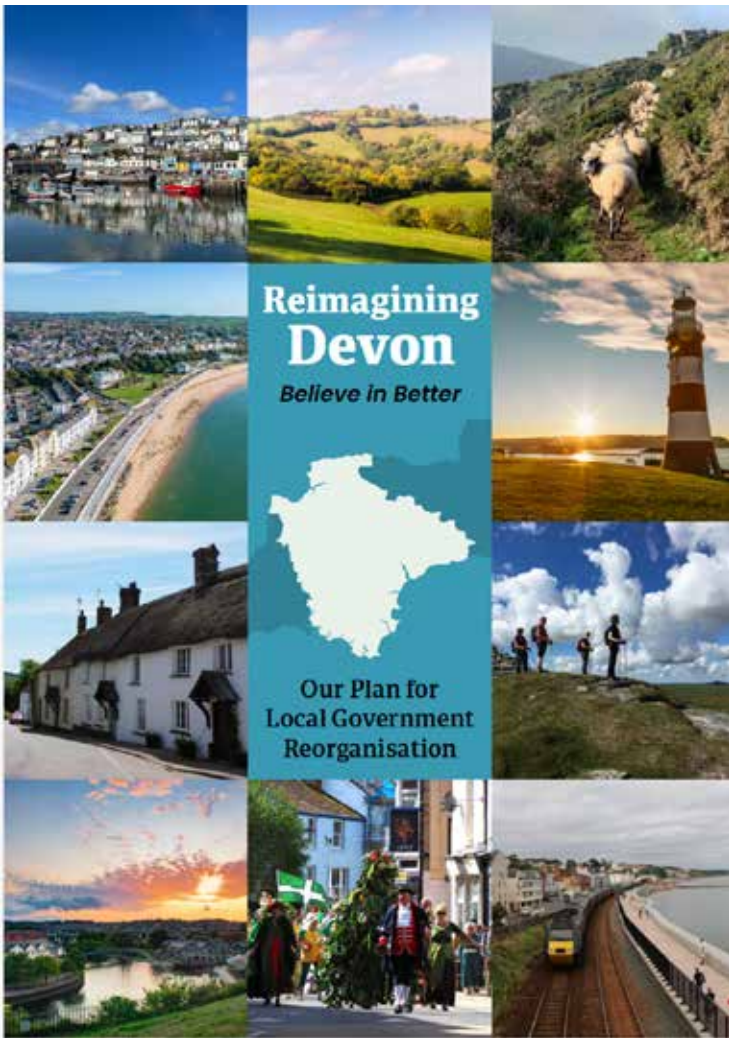
**May 2027 – March 2028:** The newly elected "shadow" council(s) prepare for the transition.

**1 April 2028:** New unitary authority/ authorities take over all services, and old councils cease to exist.

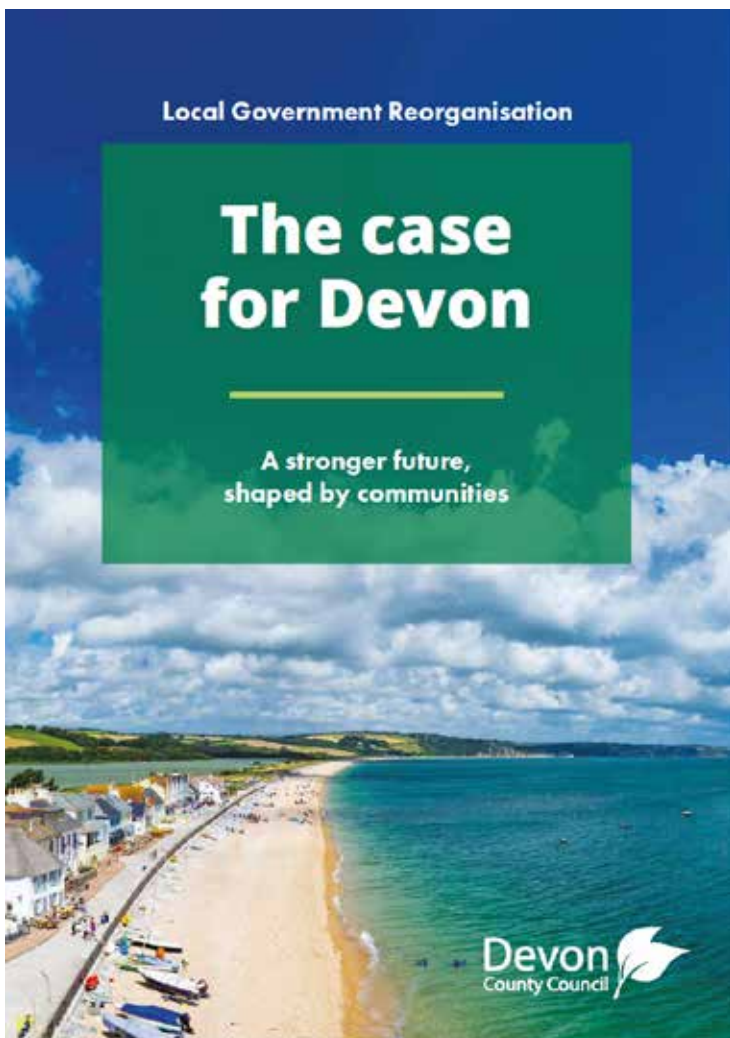
There will be significantly fewer Unitary Councillors than the current combined total of Devon County Councillors and District Councillors. There are currently 481 councillors in Devon.

Each proposal submitted to government has a different number of councillors that are anticipated to serve Devon – ranging from **200 to 302**. The 4-5-1 proposal sets out a total of **234** councillors.

Your Unitary Councillor will have a larger 'Division' and serve more parishes. They will also have to cover the two Portfolios of responsibility currently covered by a District Councils and Devon County Council



<https://www.devonlgr.co.uk/>



## NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA COMMITTEES

Depending on which boundary model is decided by Government in June/July 2026, there could be about 17 NACs across Devon - each serving about 50,000 people.

Parish and town councils can be part of the NAC if they want to contribute to decision making. There is no obligation to attend. Meetings will probably be held about four times a year.

NACs are intended to bring decision-making closer to communities, ensuring local priorities shape services.

Membership would likely involve town and parish councillors, representatives from voluntary organizations, charities, health services, and businesses. All elected Unitary Councillors for that area are obliged to attend to listen to local opinion before making their own decisions on behalf of the electorate.

Initially acting in an advisory capacity, they are designed to eventually manage local assets, budgets, and services such as parks, allotments, and small-scale projects.

## UNITARY-READY

I will be offering further inter-parish meetings (i.e. **'Salcombe Division Assemblies'**) to provide more opportunities for our parish and town councils to create inter-parish links and aim to be **'Unitary-Ready'**

At the second Salcombe Division Assembly held in March 2026, delegates considered they needed:

- To continue to **meet occasionally**, before the Unitary is elected, in order to debate whether the following actions would help prepare them for the Neighbourhood Area Committees.
- Ask their parish councils whether a **parish councillor** on each council be **appointed** to keep abreast of developments on Local Government Reorganisation and bring consultations and issues to the attention of the parish council.
- Is it helpful to appoint someone to represent a small group of parish councils on the NAC? (ie a **'Neighbourhood Hub'**)? Could this be on a rota basis?
- Would the opinion of parish and town councils at NAC meetings hold more weight if it was **'evidence-based'**? For example - based on a local Housing Needs Survey or analysis of the local Demographics, Connectivity, Social Care Needs analysis etc. Where can this information be obtained?



## HIGHWAYS

With the support of our Neighbourhood Highways Officer, I now better understand the reasons why our roads are in such a bad state of repair and have developed a series of resources and events to contribute to the recovery of our local road networks. The following initiatives illustrate what I have been able to achieve, with the support of our parish and town councils and Road Wardens.

1. Piloted the development of **Highways Parish Priority Lists** for each parish and town council to deliberate all highways issues as a **Full Agenda** Item, minutes taken by the Clerk and provided to myself. This is a unique consultation programme which is being considered by other **County Councillors** and **Neighbourhood Highways Officers** because it brings local opinions more pro-actively into the **Local Highways Asset Management Plans**. It makes the next step easier towards **co-funding highways improvement projects** (other than potholes) to get them implemented sooner than otherwise possible due to other Devon-wide priorities. See Handbook.

2. Encouraging DCC Residents and businesses to first use the **DCC Report it** platform ( <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>) for any Highways issues and to raise general concerns about issues with their parish councils for consideration in the agreed Highways Parish Priority Lists process. This reduces the risk of individuals over-emphasising the local importance of a particular request for investment and allows the parish council to provide perspective.
3. Once the Parish Council decides the local priorities, they a simple **annotated OS Map** with **referenced sites** detailed in the Priority List for follow up meetings and progress reports (see Handbook for examples). Our NHO and I then organise an **On-Site meeting** (with Clerk and Parish Councillors) to look at the issues raised. Sometimes, immediate feedback on next steps or clarification can be provided at the Site Meetings. The site references make it easier to track progress rather than relying solely on complex email trails. Clerks play a vital role in this endeavour.

## HIGHWAYS (cont)

4. Over the last six months, I have collated all my learnings about the full range of Highways issues from potholes to Zebra Crossings and brought this together in a (75-page) '**Handbook for Parish & Town Councils partnering with DCC**'. I did this, because many of the questions raised at parish council meetings should already have been understood by Parish Councillors and Clerks. This Handbook will be published on my website [www.Louise4Devon.com](http://www.Louise4Devon.com) once it has been fact-checked by senior executives at DCC Highways. This is the first time such a publication has been produced, and I aim to ensure all my parish councillors and Road Wardens have a hard copy. It will then be shared with County Councillors of all political parties from across Devon.

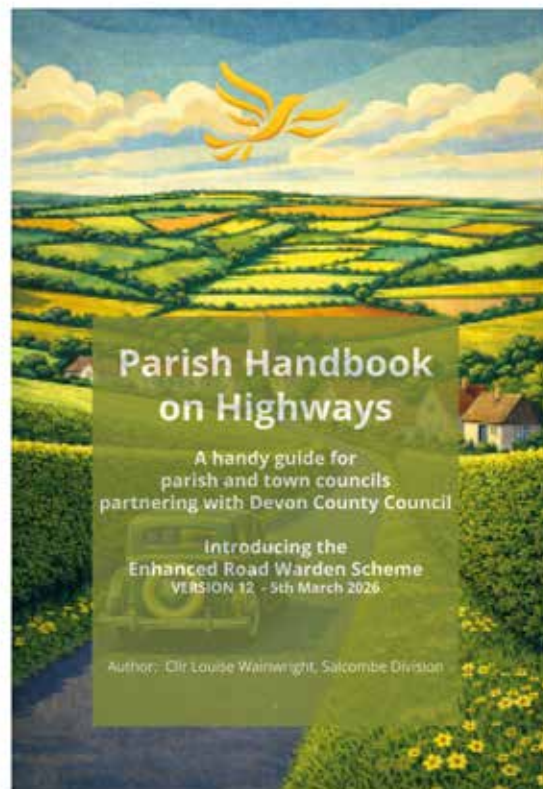
5 The Handbook addresses all the '**angry questions**' about the **Pothole Pandemic**. By creating a better understanding of the issues – I have concluded that the volunteer **Road Warden Scheme** is an essential part of Devon's Road Recovery Programme. I have encouraged all parish and town councils to subscribe to this scheme, appoint a Road Warden and enlist volunteers to assist the Road Warden. Road Wardens fix '**Non-Defect** potholes' using equipment and materials provided by DCC or the Parish Council.

6. Other County Councils have been in touch with DCC about their Road Warden Scheme (started in 2017) and it is recognised now as an important contribution to the recovery of our roads nationally. It failed to take off in 2017 because County Councillors did not understand its importance then and the road network was not as bad as it is now....that failure has accelerated the demise of our road network. I have begun lobbying County Councillors of all political parties to promote the Road Warden Scheme and have asked DCC for a **specialist Members Development Training on Potholes**.

7 I have brought all Road Wardens into a **Salcombe Division Road Wardens WhatsApp** Group. We have begun sharing good practice and equipment. We are deliberating whether to share storage facilities for equipment, waste and recycling empty tubs etc. I am negotiating improvements suggested by our Road Wardens and participating parish councils with the senior executives at Highways.

8. I have enlisted the support of DCC media team and MGroup (i.e. our Highways contractor) to film a **Masterclass on Pothole Repair** for our Salcombe Division Road Wardens on 24th April. This will also be filmed by BBC Spotlight because of the importance of this Scheme to the recovery of Devon's road network.

9. The above video and subsequent training videos will be published on my new **YouTube Channel 'Devon Pothole Ninjas'** so that everyone can benefit. I have a logo for the Pothole Ninjas which can be used by parish councils wanting to advertise for volunteers to help their Road Wardens. The ratio of pothole teams should be 1 (Road Warden): 2 (volunteer helpers).



10. Some parishes, which cannot recruit a volunteer Road Warden have already precepted to contract a **paid Lengthsman** to clear gullies, buddle-holes and fix 'Non Defect' potholes.

11. I have the agreement of senior executives at DCC to contribute to a **'Highways Assembly'** on 6th May 2025. All parish and town councils in the Salcombe Division will be invited to attend and hear from Rob Jacobs (DCC Deputy Director – Highways and Infrastructure Development), Ian James (Highways and Traffic Management Group Manager), Cllr Dan Thomas (DCC Cabinet Member for Highways) and the CEO of Mgroup (tbc). The Programme will be published shortly.

12. I am offering a series of **Highways Surgeries** in June for the public to come along and share their views as well as hear about the progress which has been made with the support of our Parish and Town Councils. I hope to recruit **Pothole Ninjas** (approved volunteers to help Road Wardens with Chapter 8 certification) at these meetings.

13. I am escalating practical suggestions on how to improve the Road Warden Scheme, communications and quality control from parish councils and Road Wardens to senior executives at DCC.

14. I am **Vice Chair** of the **South Hams Highways and Traffic Orders Committee** SH – HaTOC, which meets about twice per year to review proposals submitted through our Neighbourhood Highways Officer about a range of issues involved in traffic management (speed limits, double yellow lines, parking restrictions etc.)



## Water Quality

DCC Full Council (4th Sept 2025) agreed a Motion to DCC Cabinet to sign up to the **Universal Declaration of River Rights** and to promote the following Rights within Devon. Follow QR code for full details. Highlights of the actions agreed by cabinet

The right to:

- Flow naturally and seasonally
- Perform essential ecological functions
- Be free from pollution
- Sustain and be sustained by freshwater sources
- Native biodiversity and ecological integrity
- Regenerate from environmental harm

The Council further resolves to:

1. Acknowledge the intrinsic rights of rivers in Devon.
2. Work with communities, trusts and experts to support legal and practical recognition of these rights.
3. **Embed river rights in council policies on planning, land use, water and biodiversity.**
4. Advocate to the Environment Agency and government for river rights frameworks and stronger protections.
5. Support local initiatives such as citizen science monitoring, riparian planting and sustainable farming.
6. Request that the Environment Agency publish an annual "State of the Rivers"

report with local partners.

Devon County Council will be bringing local government and stakeholders together to a **Devon River Conference** during the summer of 2026. Date to be agreed.

In the meantime, I will be presenting information to Salcombe Division parish and town councils of the **Inter-Parish Water Quality Groups**. These could provide the foundation of a Devon-wide initiative underpinned by the support of neighbouring parishes through which rivers and their tributaries flow.

I will be showing the SDNL animated cartoon about river/estuary biodiversity and pollution at my parish presentations – together with a map of the relevant catchment parishes and a brief summary of our shared local issues and opportunities to make improvements. Take a peek at **The Drip cartoon** here: <https://youtu.be/bSrgPLkvP8Q?si=J6KLrvFo1iolqXqR>

As your Devon County Councillor, I sit on the **South Devon National Landscapes** committee. SDNL employs an **Estuary Officer**, Nigel Mortimer, who is our local expert on river biodiversity and risks. Nigel hosts two meetings a year for the **Avon Estuary Forum** <https://southdevon-nl.org.uk/estuaries-management-plan/avon-estuary/avon-estuary-forum-meetings/>. The next meeting will be Tuesday 21st April

### HELP NEEDED at Devon County Show

I am the curator of the exhibition and need some help...if you are wanting to help create and/or man the exhibition with me – please get in touch.





These images are available for you to use and I can provide roll up banners for your use after the Devon County Show.



## Devon Farms

With a long professional involvement with farmers from across the world, I have put a lot of time into supporting local farmers in Devon.

I have organised events to highlight the issues they are facing on Inheritance Tax and developed trial protocols for the Integrated Pest Management for bovine TB and tick control.

As **Vice Chair** of the **Devon Farms Estate**, I have taken part in many farm monitoring visits, interviewed prospective tenants and contributed to the monthly pre-meetings and full committee meetings of the Devon Farms Estate Committee.



## Locality Budget

I have been able to support the following local organisations in the last financial year:

- The Deer Wood Trust CIC: Infrastructure to enable Woodland Horticulture sessions
- Malborough Parish Council: Renovation of former BT telephone box to create a community information hub and seed swap facility.
- Loddiswell Playing Fields and Village Hall Trust: Upgrading kitchen and electrical items.
- Kingston Parish Council: Renovation of community bus shelter.
- Devon Young Fishers CIC: Purchase of self-inflating life jackets.
- Buckland-tout-Saints Parish Council: Defibrillator for Ledstone.

The 2026/27 Locality Budget Scheme has started again. I will be able to roll-over some of the unspent fund from 25/26. I am inviting applications from organisations and parish councils with their own bank accounts to contact me.

Applications on the following will receive priority:

1. Equipment and storage for Road Warden Scheme IF other funding sources prove inadequate.
2. Co-funding of therapy, activity sessions for families and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
3. Recruitment drives for social care volunteers (e.g. for drivers and befriending) with a focus on supporting households with a member suffering from Dementia.
4. Public awareness events focussing on: Renewable Energy, Carbon Footprints or Water Quality.

## SEND

Supporting families with children having **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities** was amongst the top three priorities of the newly elected County Councillors for Devon County Council in May 2025. Service provision remains inadequate although it continues to absorb huge amounts of money. Families are struggling. This is not an area I understand well but I am working with the Cabinet Member for SEND to develop a **“Handbook for Devon Families on SEND provision and services”** in 2026.

In preparation for this, I held one **SEND Surgery** in Modbury last year and have begun bringing SEND families together to find out more about their experiences with DCC and general support that they need. I want to create more family-to-family support groups with access to specialist therapy sessions that they identify as useful.

Devon County Council has been forced to manage the fall-out of underfunding and huge demand, by funding what might appear to be non-cost-effective solutions – particularly around taxi school transport and distant and sometimes private specialist schools. **Full details** here <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/were-prioritising-roads-childrens-send-services-839million-budget/>

## LIBRARIES

I took part in a site visit to five libraries in South Hams as part of the DCC review of the library service provision. Devon County Council received about 25,000 responses to its public consultation about your views on the future of our Libraries in Devon.

Revised proposals based on public feedback are scheduled to be presented to the Cabinet by April 2026.

In October 2025, the Cabinet agreed in principle to extend the current library contract with Libraries Unlimited by two years, covering April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2028.

The Council reversed proposed efficiency savings of £650,000 in February 2026, instead choosing to support the library budget and restore the book fund.



## ADULT SOCIAL CARE

This is another area where parishioners are often unaware of the services they are entitled to or how to apply for support. I have also been learning how to navigate this field through several casework interactions with people in Salcombe Division.

I have met with Modbury Caring several times to explore how I can support their recruitment campaign for more volunteer drivers and befrienders.

I have also provided information to volunteer drivers and organisations about how to optimise the benefits of the **Blue Badge** system and avoid unnecessary Fixed Penalty Notices. Devon County Council can provide an 'organisation' with Blue Badges for their team providing transport for people with disabilities; care workers can themselves apply for Blue Badges if they are providing regular transport services and individuals can use their own Blue Badge in any vehicle. Just remember to display the Blue Badge in the windscreen of a parked car in a Blue Badge designated zone.

## FLOODS & COASTAL EROSION

As a Devon County Councillor, I am part of the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee which meets about three times per year. This organisation is responsible for reviewing the defence of our coast line and reduce the risks of flooding.

Find our more here:

<https://swfloodandcoastal.org.uk/>

## INLAND FISHERIES

As Devon County Councillor, I also contribute to the **Devon and Severn Inland Fisheries and Conservation Authority** SW - IFCA. This meets about three times per year. Find out more about what we do here:

<https://www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk/>

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

I contribute two or three times a year to the DCC Standards Committee which oversees the conduct on County Councillors.

