



Devon County Councillor Report November 2025



@louise4devon



Louise Wainwright

I serve communities in the parishes of
Bigbury, Kingston, Modbury, Ringmore
Aveton Gifford, Loddiswell, Churchstow,
Buckland-Tout-Saints, West Alvington
Halwell & Moreleigh, Woodleigh, South Huish
Malborough, South Milton, Salcombe and Thurlestone

Your DCC Councillor



Salcombe Division Parish Assembly

Cliff House, Salcombe Saturday 29th Nov 2025

Delegates: Cllr **Louise Wainwright** (DCC Salcombe Division), Cllr **Jasper Evans** (Salcombe Chair), Cllr **Paul Arnott** (DCC Cabinet Member LGR), Cllr **Mark Long** (SHDC), Cllr **Lee Bonham** (SHDC), **Helen Shipperley** (Salcombe Town Clerk), Cllr Valerie Scott (Bigbury), **Cllr Mark Goodey** (Salcombe), Cllr **Paul Harvey** ((Loddiswell), Cllr **Diana Jones** (Buckland-tout-Saints), Cllr **Jane Harrison** (Buckland-tout-Saints), Cllr **Angela Sharidge** (Buckland-tout-Saints), Cllr **Ann Turner** (Modbury), Cllr **Jo Hocking** (Chair South Huish), Cllr **David Smyth** (Thurlestone), Cllr **Christopher Eddy** (Ringmore Vice Chair), Cllr **Barbara Price** (Modbury Chair), Cllr **Kizzy Sims-Stirling** (Salcombe), **Ian Bramble** (Clerk Ringmore & Bigbury), Cllr **Rosa Lewis** (Thurlestone), Cllr **Geoff Stewart** (Churchstow), Cllr **Roger Hind** (Churchstow) .

Apologies: Woodleigh PC, South Milton PC, Avetoin Gifford PC, Kingston PC, Malborough PC. West Alvington PC.

Thanks to Cllr Paul Arnott for speaking to the Assembly and the SHDC Councillors for their insights. Parish & town Councillors and Clerks raised invaluable points and confirmed their commitment to continued debate and collaboration in their preparation for 'Unitary-readiness' by May 2027. Thanks to Salcombe Town Council for hosting this meeting, in particular Cllr Jasper Evans and Town Clerk Helen Shipperley.

Minutes of this meeting will be circulated to Clerks soon. In the meantime, this is a brief report on key issues raised.

Summary of Discussions

Cllr Paul Arnott reinforced these messages about **Neighbourhood Area Committees** (NAC) to the Assembly:

1. Neighbourhood Area Committees are essential if the voices of communities are to be heard by the new Unitary Authority and local democracy assured.

2. There could be 16 NAC in Devon served by 6 Unitary Councillors, a total of 40 to 50 people on each NAC (**town & parish councils**, chambers of commerce, police, NHS, fire & rescue, education, voluntary faith) and they would represent about 50,000 people.
3. Parish & town councils have a choice - they only need to be on the NAC if the 'want' to be on the NAC. Otherwise it could be no change in business operations at the parish level and representations to NAC could be through the local Unitary Councillor or another parish/town council on the NAC.
4. The NAC would not be a talking shop, it would have full IT and Democratic Services support from Officers). Planning Officers will have a duty to work with NAC.
5. DALC would be able to help parish/town councils to lobby Government to empower Neighbourhood Area Committees to safe-guard local democracy.
6. The combined Reserves of all PC/TC in Devon are significant.
7. Neighbourhood Plans are sometimes ignored (Cllr Mark Long strongly contested this). Almost

Some issues raised by Delegates

1. **General Powers of Competence** is a complex issue and a valuable tool to enable local councils to raise funding to serve the needs of their community. However, most rural parishes would be unable to fund the training of a Clerk to ensure compliance with GPC. The Clerk training course is 300 hrs and the course fee £500. However the parish council would have to fund the man-hours of the Clerk to undergo the training. This cost is prohibitive and excludes rural parishes. It was proposed that DALC be asked to lobby Government for dispensation for adjoining parishes to form a Board of Clerks Hub with one qualified Clerk to ensure compliance.
2. The **exclusion of co-opted councillors** in the calculation of the percentage of councillors needed to comply with GPC, was challenged. It

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was considered that since there was sometimes no physical election for councillors (because there were the same number of applicants as there were seats) then there was no essential difference between a co-opted councillor and one that was deemed 'elected' even though there was no Election process.

3. Planning decisions should not be the remit of the NAC if it only met four times per year because planning applications need to be reviewed more urgently.
4. Some rural parishes might need to merge under one Clerk.
5. If parish and town councils had more financial responsibility and seemed to have a bigger voice at NAC - younger people might be attracted to join parish councils

Questionnaires

Delegates completed **pilot questionnaires** on a range of topics (Is PC/TC 'Unitary-ready', professional updating for parish councillors on LGR/GPC etc, improved communication with parishioners to better represent their views at NAC, General Powers of Competence, Clerks working hours)

The answers are being collated and will be shared soonest. The pilot questionnaire will be improved based on feedback from Delegates and a digital questionnaire will be sent to all Clerks for considered responses from Councillors. The Questionnaire will be offered to SHDC to share more widely across other parishes in South Hams - in advance of the two proposed meetings in January 2026.

Early 2026 – The formal Government consultation on the proposals will begin on LGR

July 2026 – The Government aims to announce which boundary proposal to implement in Devon.



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Next Meetings about Neighbourhood Area Committees

Modbury PC have offered to host the **next Salcombe Division Parish Assembly** at the QE2 Hall in Modbury in January (tbc). It was proposed that the meeting would be addressed by Councillors from other areas where the NAC has been successfully set up. We will ask them for what 'works well' and what does not. We will seek advice about what additional powers should we begin to lobby for in advance of our NAC being set up - to ensure effective parish representation. We will invite the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) to speak. I will liaise with Modbury PC to organise the Agenda and Speakers. All 16 parish/town councils are invited to attend along with local District Councillors in the Salcombe Division.

Cllr Mark Long (SHDC) proposed that SHDC should host a wider meeting to extend the delegates for the existing **Mayors of South Hams & West Devon** meetings - to include **Clerks and Chairs of PC/TCs in South Hams** and our **District and County Councillors**. This meeting will be with **Andy Bates CEO of SHDC**. Date probably in January (tbc).

REMEMBRANCE



I joined many organisations and individuals who came together to remember those who gave their lives in the service of their country and the interests of peace to place a wreath on behalf of DCC at the Remembrance Parade in Salcombe.

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DEVON YOUTH COUNCIL

I attended the Devon Youth Council meeting with Devon County Councillors in Tiverton Youth Centre.

The Devon Youth Council is asking us to "Believe in Us, Trust Us".

They are responsibly allocating £150,000 of grant funding to organisations that educate and support the needs of Young People in Devon. Still a third of the funds left.

Anyone over 18 years of age can stand to be a parish or town councillor.

County Councillors were told at yesterday's conference, organised by NYC, that they want to co-produce local strategies to improve the lives of young people aged 13-18 plus care experienced people and those with SEND up to the age of 25.

I am confident that young people would bring a positive benefit to our local communities if they were encouraged and invited to participate.

Sidmouth and Barnstaple actually have a **Youth Town Council**. I would love Salcombe Division to have a Youth Council. Please get in touch if you want to help make this happen for our Youth. They are part of our Present... not just our Future!

Find out more about NYC here:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/child-family-support/young-people/youth-voice-and-participation/participation-groups/>

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Salcombe Division Pothole Teams

Collaboration

The **Road Warden for Modbury Parish Council**, Cllr Bill Cole, has kindly offered to provide a **demonstration/master class on pothole fixing** to any other Road Warden and their volunteer team in Salcombe Division (subject to MPC agreement). If there are funding implications I might be able to divert some locality funds to this as its important. I will do my best.

I am very grateful indeed to Cllr Bill Cole for this generous gesture. He might even come over to another parish to provide the demo on your own potholes,. This is to be discussed and confirmed by the MPC.

It would be great if a few local parishes could agree to have a joint demo and provide tea and cakes maybe? Please chat with your Clerks about whether you want to join in and then let me know. Its likely to be in Jan/Feb unless the weather is too cold for using cold tar

The Modbury Team team has been identified by a local expert as being a 'gold standard' pothole team. Modbury Parish Council also pays from its own reserves, for the emulsion that goes into the pothole before the cold tar

and the sealant which is applied after the cold tar.

They have a proper job compactor which was paid for by the **Devon County Council Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund** (HMCEF).

If potholes are fixed properly with cold tar and emulsion - they last longer and address the problem of the many many potholes that will not be fixed by DCC because they do not fir the 'defect criteria'

Our Neighbourhood Highways Officer has to approve the requests for pallets of cold tar - and I believe that Modbury is placing the biggest orders. Hoping this means they have the fewest potholes!

It is only possible to order whole pallets of cold tar but sometimes the Road Wardens cannot use the full pallet before it sets hard in the tubs due to the cold weather! Cllr Andy King (Ringmore) is also a Road Warden. He has suggested that all Road Wardens in the Salcombe Division join a **Salcombe Road Wardens WhatsApp** Group to coordinate the sharing of full pallets of cold tar.

If you would like to follow up on either the proposed workshop or join the WhatsApp group - please contact me for an invitation and a link

Louise4Devon@gmail.com

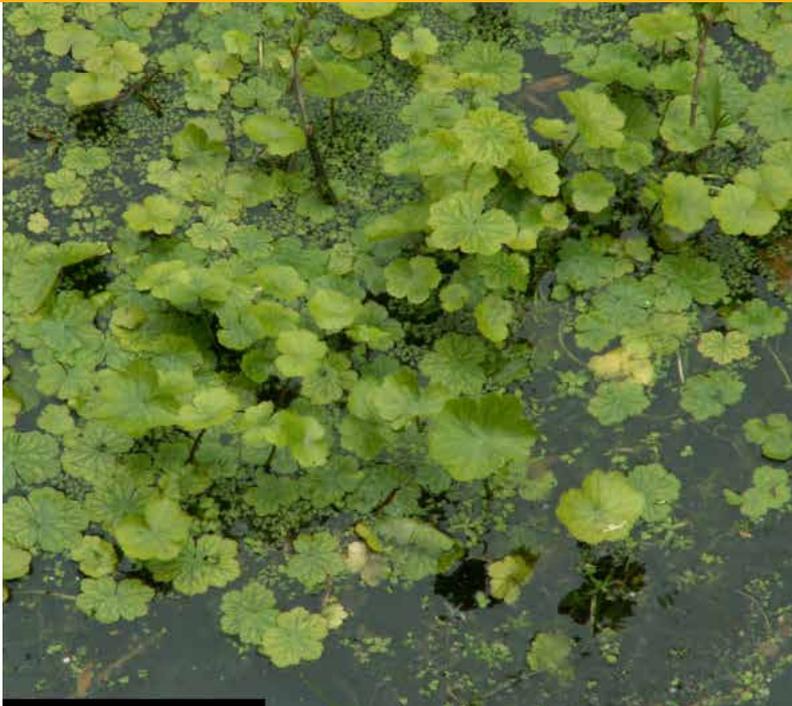
Abnormal Loads and Embargo Travel Times

Progress at last. All movements of static caravans to and from Challaborough will now be communicated by park managers to the community via Bigbury Drums e-newsletter, Charterlands Chatter Facebook and by email to Bigbury Golf Club, Bigbury PC and Ringmore PC . Bigbury Bay Caravan Park and Parkdean Resorts will be invited to use the proposed communication channels.

To get this issue into perspective - log-jammed lanes are a rare by very annoying problem that has been a thorn in the side of many parish councils over 25 years. Most caravans are moved without an issue.

Police Sergeant Charlie Wilkes and the Devon & Cornwall Police have provided the **Embargo Timetable** for the movement of Abnormal Loads requiring an Escort Vehicle. If members of the public observe movement of abnormal loads outside these times they should **call 101** and the police will attempt to attend. Enforcement is a last resort which is unlikely to be needed, now that the embargo is understood and seems to be a manageable timetable.

South Devon National Landscapes



I contributed to the SDNL meeting which included topics such as the rising threat of **floating pennywort** - a very fast-growing invasive species which present in our catchments in South Devon.

Native to the Americas and introduced in the 1980s through the ornamental aquatic trade, floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) is a strong contender for the title of worst aquatic weed in the UK, having spread rapidly from garden ponds into our waterways.

Since 2014, it has been banned from sale. It is also illegal to cause floating pennywort to grow in the wild. Despite this, its fast, asexual growth and environmental adaptability has enabled the plant to continue to spread exponentially.

Floating pennywort forms dense mats of rounded leaves which float across the water's surface, depleting oxygen levels and light for photosynthesis, threatening fish and invertebrates, and outcompeting our native water plants.

In addition to its negative environmental

impacts, the economic costs of this species can be high. Losses in tourism revenue are caused through disrupted fishing, river navigation and water sports. The weed also impacts commercial fisheries and blocks pipes and pumps which damages waterworks and can lead to flooding. Across Great Britain and Europe, these costs are estimated to exceed £25 million per year.

Slapton Field Studies Centre

The Field Studies Centre is raising funds (and needs another £5000) to allow it to host a supervised release trial managed by CABI of a biological control agent for floating pennywort. T

The Environment Agency has agreed a limited number of release sites of a weevil which feeds on floating pennywort. (*Listronotus elongatus*).

Please keep a look out for this damaging aquatic weed and report it to SDNL. enquiries@southdevon-nl.org.uk



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