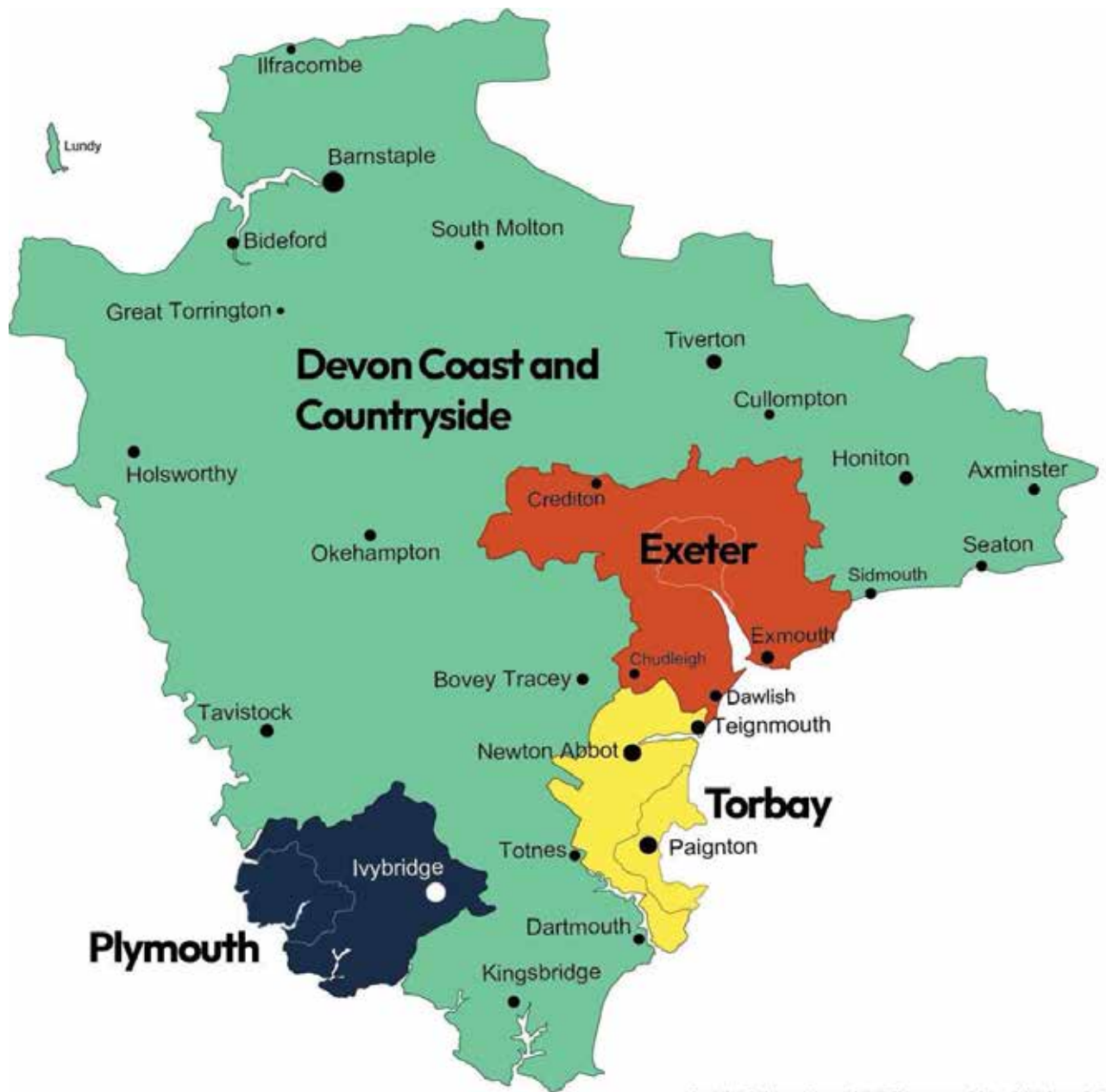




REALITY CHECK

Devon Coastal & Rural Unitary Authority.

An already bad situation has just taken a turn for the worse. The Local Government Reorganisation announcement on **16th July** has created four new Unitary Authorities –

- Greater Plymouth,
- Greater Exeter,
- Greater Torbay and 'the rest'
- **Devon Coast & Countryside (DC&C).**

Salcombe Division will fall within the Devon Coast and Countryside Unitary Authority.

Elections for Unitary Councillors will be held in **May 2027**.

A **Shadow Unitary Council** will sit alongside the two existing tiers of councils (Devon County Council and all the District Councils e.g. SHDC) for one year (**May 27 to May 28**).

In **May 2028**, Devon County Council will cease to exist, as will all the District Councils, Councillors and Officers.

From May 28, there will probably be just one Unitary Councillor serving the 16 parishes of the Salcombe Division, whereas this Division is currently served by one County Councillor and five District Councillors. The actual numbers will be confirmed this autumn.

The existential crisis is that the DC&C Unitary will have **insufficient council tax revenues** to provide basic services across a very large geographical area. This is because the **high revenue tax sources**, in Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay, now fall within the remit of the **three 'greater' urban-based authorities** where services are less expensive to deliver

because they are concentrated in a smaller area. **Providing services across the vast, rural area of DC&C is extraordinarily more expensive than the same services within an urban centre.** This Government has already **removed the £10.1 million annual Rural Services Delivery Grant** from Devon County Council to 'repurpose funds toward areas of higher deprivation' – in urban areas. The gap between urban and rural communities has just widened.

The inability of the Devon County Council to provide services to the level that it needs to, has always been entirely due to insufficient funds. Most people understand that the main driver for this unfair situation has been the exceptionally **unjust cuts** to the annual government grant to DCC. These have amounted to cuts of **72% in real terms since 2011**.

I have spent a huge amount of time since I was elected, exploring this deficit in relation to pothole repairs. I have concluded that **community self-help schemes are the only opportunity we have to reduce the impact of the cuts on the lives of people in rural and coastal communities.** The lesson I have learned is that whilst others above our pay grade debate the outcome of Judicial Reviews – those of us at the coal face are going to have to do what is possible to **mitigate the impact.**



@ 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.

Bearing in mind that this seemingly impossible task will fall on the shoulders of Officers who already have a full-time job, running services and keeping the existing show on the road – this is a very big call on individuals who are unlikely to ever be acknowledged or thanked by tax payers.

Some will take their redundancy money and not want to be re-employed by DC&C because they know that model is doomed to failure. We **could lose some of the institutional knowledge and expertise** that will be needed to make the best possible use of the even more limited funds available. These are rare people, not easily replaced.

So, what can we do? We must look for opportunities, recognise our strengths as well as our weaknesses - and make the best possible plan.

I believe **parish and town councils will play an increasingly important role**. I have been appointed to the **DCC Local Government Reorganisation Scrutiny Group** which has the responsibility of acting as a sounding board for the hand-over strategy from DCC to DC&C Authority.

I will be organising further **Salcombe Division Assemblies in October** to help bring the 16 parish and town councils together to discuss how they want to be involved in **Local Hubs** and the **Neighbourhood Area Committees**.

Where there is a will there is a way.

Cllr Louise Wainwright
Salcombe Electoral Division
July 2026

MY PRIORITIES

Between now and May 2028 -
How will I be contributing to transition to the
D C&C Unitary Authority?

- Committee Member of the **DCC Local Government Scrutiny Group**.
- Vice Chair of **Devon Farms Estate**
- **Highways Scrutiny Committee** - contract for next Term Maintenance Contractor (2028).
- Organise Salcombe **Division Assemblies** to encourage forward thinking and **SWOT** analysis to **inform strategy** for representation of local community needs.
- Provide support for parish & town councils to improve **local needs analysis** that informs their representation in Local Hubs and Neighbourhood Area Committees.
- Develop **online public consultation** platform to confirm local priorities and concerns.
- Provide support for parish & town councils wanting to develop **Local Hubs**
- Provide support for parish & town councils wanting to develop their ability to contribute effectively to **Neighbourhood Area Committees**
- Develop **SWOT analysis** for DC&C Unitary in consultation with parish and town councils in Salcombe Division.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

- Attend Annual Parish meetings, Parish Forums and Parish Council meetings when my input to debates is requested.
- Continue to meet with parishioners, parish councillors, and organisations with specific problems.
- Escalate concerns to Devon County Council as needed via the DCC **Members Portal**.
- Respond to hundreds of emails to **louise.wainwright@devon.gov.uk**
- Regularly post information on Facebook @ **[louise4devon](#)**

LGR SCRUTINY GROUP

Role and Responsibility

A committee of 14 Members will:

1. Review the authority's approach to Local Government Reorganisation following the Government decision in 2026, including its **position and onward engagement** with Government, other local authorities and partners during the implementation phase.
2. Review the authority's **preparedness for, risks** arising from, and management of changes arising from Local Government Reorganisation to support the safe and legal transition to the new authority or authorities.
3. Consider the **effectiveness of proposals and decisions** of the Cabinet and the authority in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.
4. Make **reports and recommendations**, as appropriate, arising from the discharge of these functions.

How will I represent Salcombe Division here?

I will:

- Keep parish/town councils informed of developments and risks to service provision
- Discuss proposed mitigation measures with parish/town councils and feed back concerns and proposals into my reports into the LGR Scrutiny Committee.

DEVON FARMS ESTATE

Role and Responsibility

As Vice Chair I will:

1. Identify risks to the Devon Farms Estate from the housing development targets of the expanded urban areas of Greater Exeter, Greater Plymouth and Greater Torbay.
2. Develop communication strategy with Officers and Committee Members to safeguard the Devon Farms Estate.

How will I represent Salcombe Division here?

I will:

- Keep parish/town councils informed of risks and how these can be managed.

TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Role and Responsibility

1. Explore the strengths and weaknesses of the current contract with MGroup
2. Develop an improved contract for the next Term Maintenance Contract

How will I represent Salcombe Division here?

I will:

- Keep parish/town councils informed of developments and seek their views.

ROAD WARDEN SCHEME

Thank you to all parish and town councils that have signed the Road Warden Agreement.

My Version 2 of the Pothole Handbook will be out by the end of the week and is much easier to follow.

Here is a quick guide:

FIRST STEPS

1. Clerk signs **Road Warden Agreement** with DCC having agreement of parish council.
2. Clerk gives names and contacts of volunteers (road warden and helpers) to DCC, organises appropriate **training**, additional **insurances** and purchase of **equipment**.
3. Clerk applies to **Highways Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund** to reimburse purchase of equipment.
4. Road warden and volunteers undertake **local survey** of 'Non-Defect' and 'Defect' potholes to plan works, inform Neighbourhood Highways Officer of plan and report all Defect potholes in one swoop on the DCC Report it Portal.
5. Clerk orders **first pallet of coldlay** and bitumen spray.
6. Works begin

COMMUNICATION

Any **administrative queries** relating to signing up to Road Warden Scheme, including training, funding applications, and ordering materials - should be directed by the **parish clerk** to

communityselfhelp@devon.gov.uk.
0345 155 1004

Enquiries to DCC are best directed via the **parish clerk**, rather than individual parish councillors, road wardens or volunteers. This enables the parish council to be kept informed of local issues and progress.

Any queries relating to local works including **site specific guidance** or approving activities/approaches, or general queries about how the scheme might work in their area - should be directed to the relevant **Neighbourhood Highways Officer** for a conversation.

TRAINING

Road Wardens

DCC provides a **grant of up to £355 per road warden** to contribute to the training and certification required to keep the roadwork team safe, minimise inconvenience to other road users and satisfy insurers.

NRSWA 01 (formerly Unit 2) Signing, Lighting and Guarding,

This is a **one-day**, face-to-face training which provides essential instruction of relevance to road wardens who are restricted to carrying out:

- **Mobile** or **short-duration** works on a single carriageway (**15 minutes** or less than **60 minutes** duration).

A theory and practical assessment leads to an **SWQR qualification** that allows the road worker to set up signs lighting and guarding around temporary roadworks on minor roads.

DCC will contribute to **NRSWA 01** training for up to 3 members of an organisation.

Click QR code below on "**How to fix a Non-Defect Pothole**" DCC YouTube.



Volunteer helpers

All volunteer helpers and the road warden are required to watch a one-hour, online **Awareness Course**.

The Clerk should contact DCC to request a **personal access code** for **named volunteers** to enable them to watch the video at their convenience (before they begin their volunteer work).

The **ratio of road wardens to volunteer helpers** is **1:2** when undertaking roadworks. The parish can have a pool of volunteers who have accessed the Awareness video and assist the road warden in rotation.

Councillors Awareness

There is a non-mandatory Awareness course offered to Councillors at all levels of local government - Parish, District and County. Up to 12 councillors can participate in each interactive online course. It provides an overview of the Signing Guiding and Lighting protocols needed by road warden teams.

Although the content is very similar to the NRSWA 01, this course **does not currently allow the Councillor to supervise roadworks , as a road warden**.

Together with this Handbook, the Councillors Awareness Course helps them become Ambassadors for the Road Warden Scheme,

INSURANCE

Devon County Council provides Third-Party liability insurance (ie '**Public Liability**') for approved activities, provided all works are carried out in line with the **Road Warden Agreement**. Clerks should follow the guidance on **additional insurance** here - follow QR code.



Consideration should be given to: **personal injury** insurance and **all risks insurance** (equipment) as well as additional **public liability**.

Vehicle insurance

Volunteers who use their own vehicles or equipment for road warden duties should notify their insurer to make sure their policy covers this type of activity, as some insurers may require prior notification or apply restrictions.

Outline Road Warden Scheme to Insurers

Parish clerks are advised to check with their insurers that their volunteers and equipment are fully covered. The Road Warden Scheme currently only exists in Devon and some insurers may not be familiar with it. When describing the scheme to insurers - clerks could include the following points:

- The Road Warden Scheme is administered and funded by Devon County Council and has been in **operation since 2016**. It is a **partnership** between parish/town councils and DCC. It enables **community-self-help** schemes to provide minor repairs where the county council no longer has the funds to do so. It is governed by a formal **Road Warden Agreement**.
- The scheme covers a range of minor repairs, including fixing finger posts, clearing gullies, grass verges and minor

potholes. All operations are described in a suite of relevant DCC **Method Statements**.

- The pothole repairs undertaken by road wardens are restricted to working on **minor single carriageway roads** ('U', 'C' and 'B' roads) and only for **mobile, short-duration** works on a single carriageway (**15 minutes** or less than **60 minutes** duration).
- The required **road signs and guarding** for Road Warden works are funded by DCC and prescribed under **NRSA 01 training** (see below). The restriction to simple, short duration roadworks means that only **stop/go signs** are occasionally needed (for roadworks taking from 15 to 60 minutes). Temporary traffic lights which are only for 'fixed asset' works of longer than one hour - are not permitted under the Road Warden Scheme.
- Road wardens hold a **SWQR qualification** when they have passed the assessment in the **NRSA 01 (formerly Unit 2) Signing, Lighting and Guarding**. This is part of the '**Safety at Street Works and Roadworks - Code of Practice**'. This is the same level of training required for commercial contractors for short duration works.
- Road wardens work with up to 2 **volunteers** who have been on a one-hour, online, **Awareness course** to enable them to understand and comply with instructions from the road warden. **Ratio Road Warden to Volunteer is 1:2**. Road wardens never work alone for safety reasons.
- Only **cold-lay tarmac** is used by road wardens (not hot-lay materials) and compaction involves the use of manually operated **tamper bars**. If parish councils also purchase a whacker plate, they will ensure operatives are qualified to use this equipment.
- All planned pothole repairs are carried out after discussion with the local **DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer** to ensure that the **road visibility, traffic volume** and average **speed is low** to reduce risks.

- Road works are only carried out by road wardens in **good daylight** when **traffic volumes are low**.



Updated V2 Pothole Handbook will be sent to Clerks next week

Extracts are in this Report

Personal Protective Equipment

Approx cost per person -

Essential

- Hi-visibility clothing (€5 to €25)
- Gloves (€10)
- Protective boots (€25 - €40)

Other

- Eye protection – goggles/visor
- Hard hat
- Ear defenders (if whacker plate used)
- Re-useable face mask
(if roadsaw used by commercial roadworker)

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT (TM)

Ensure the sufficient TM signs, bollards, and equipment are carried which are appropriate for the task / site. These must be set out in accordance with **NRSWA 01 Signing, Lighting and Guarding** of the Traffic Signs Manual and the Safety at Streetworks and Road Works Red Book.

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT *(approx costs)

Pothole work

- Hand brushes and brooms. (€12 to €30)
- Rakes: clearing leaves and surface debris. (€20 - €40)
- Shovels and spades: digging out silt mud. (€25)
- Buckets or debris tubs (€5 to €25).
- Wheelbarrows
- Large trug for breaking up cold lay (€25)
if necessary, before use.
- Hand tamping bars - to compact cold-lay (€30 - €50) .
- Rechargeable hand held leaf blower to remove dust from potholes. (€75 - €100)
- Watering can. (€10)
- 25 L Water container. (€25)

Other works

- Drain rods – for clearing blockages in gullies and pipes.
- Gulley grabbers – long-handled tools for removing debris from gullies.
- Litter pickers – removing rubbish safely.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Hand sanitiser or wipes
- Water for cleaning/flushing drains
- Waste bags for litter
- Plastic sheeting to temporarily cover drains



SIGNS & GUARDING

Weighted, reflective traffic cones 750 mm x 10 (€10 each)

Cone-mounted traffic signs for easy transport: (€30 - €50)

Road Works (2)

Road Narrows left and right (one each)

Direction white arrow on blue background (opposite directions)

Temporary obstruction 15 minutes delay (2)

Sets of cone-mounted signs are also available

Stop/Go boards. (€75 - €100 each)

Magnetic vehicle flashing light battery powered (€25 - €40)

Clerks should discuss their equipment list with **communityselfhelp@devon.gov.uk** before making an application to **Highways Community Enhancement Fund**.

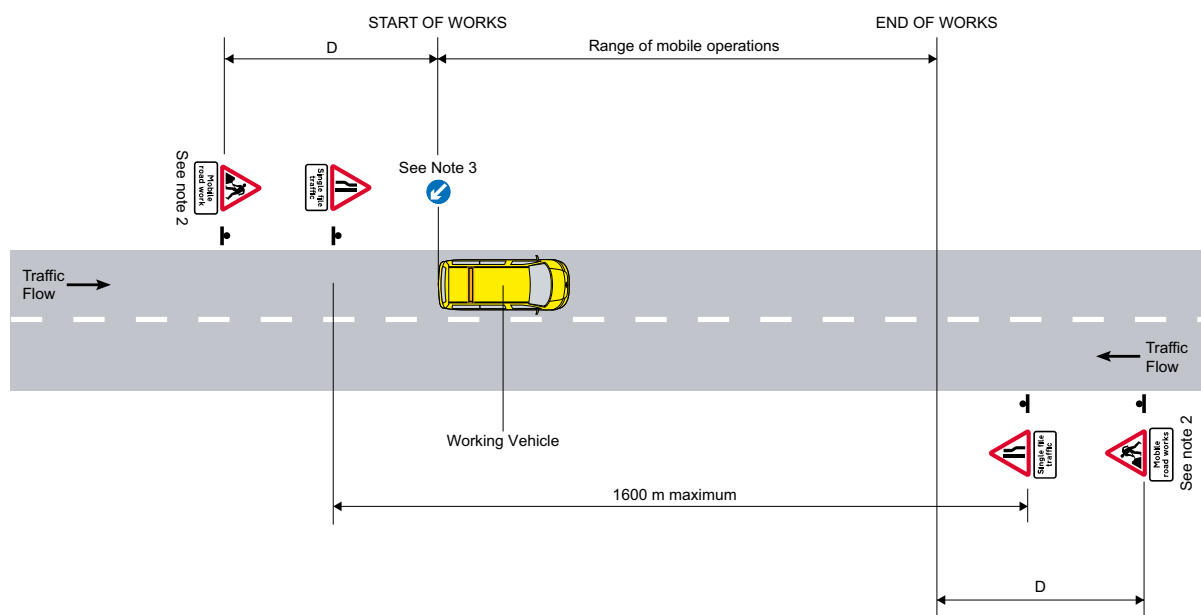
Note: DCC will not fund or recommend whacker plates or road saws.



Highways Maintenance
Community
Enhancement Fund

Part 2: Operations 84

Mobile works on a single carriageway road



Notes

- 1 For dimension D see table inside back cover.
- 2 Or permitted variants.
- 3 Where a risk assessment determines that it is necessary to display signs on the working vehicle, they must comply with TSRGD (TSR (NI) in Northern Ireland).