

Parish report from your District Councillors

November 2024

Residents' Car Parking Discount Scheme



South Hams Council is consulting with communities which have council car parks over proposals for a two-tier system of charges. Prices would rise for visitors to the area, with heavily discounted fees for local residents. Prices haven't risen for four years, and the Council is seeking extra revenue to meet the increased cost of local services, including waste and recycling collection since it was taken back in house, and to protect the provision of Leisure Centres.

Prices could double for visitors from October next year, but remain at present levels for residents, rising yearly after that in line with inflation. The top prices would be in line with our neighbouring authorities. Each household would be entitled to apply for two residents' permits, which would operate via a mobile phone app. Residents who don't have a smartphone can apply for a card which would allow them extra parking time. Communities who prefer to keep a single charge could see this rise by about 50%. At this stage no definitive decision has been taken over the proposals.

Local Government Reform



The Government has indicated that it wants to see more locally elected Mayors in the regions. This might mean an elected Mayor, with significant powers, for Devon, or for a wider region. At the same time it is extolling the virtue of savings from local authorities working more effectively and efficiently. This could be a pointer in due course towards making Devon a unitary authority like its neighbours in Cornwall,

Somerset and Dorset, merging the districts with the County Council. If this were to happen there's no suggestion yet as to whether there would be one or more such authorities across the county.

Active Travel on Dartmoor

Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) has been awarded funding from Active Travel England to develop a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

This will be similar to the LCWIP that we are completing, but with a greater focus on leisure trips given the rural populations and the high visitor numbers to the national park.



DNPA want to hear about the new active travel routes or ideas you would like to see developed, and any existing active travel routes that need improvement.

You can learn more about the project and comment on the DNPA website.

Pension Credit Take Up Campaign



The Cost of Living and Financial Support Officer will shortly be sending letters to pensioners who are currently receiving housing benefit and/or council tax reduction and whose income falls below the threshold to claim Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (PCGC).

The letter advises the resident to make a claim for PCGC as soon as possible and signposts them to the PCGC calculator and to organisations, including the Council, that can assist them with any questions or help complete an application form.

Pension Credit can be worth on average £3,900 per year and, from this year, it will automatically passport eligible pensioners to receive the Winter Fuel Payment. 21 December is the last possible date to make a successful backdated claim in order to receive the Winter Fuel Payment.

The Cost of Living and Financial Support Officer is also arranging drop-in sessions at local libraries to try to reach residents that may need additional financial help. As soon as we have confirmed dates and locations we will provide Members with a further update.

There will be many more residents that could potentially be entitled to claim PCGC who may be struggling with their energy costs. We would like to identify and help these residents, but unfortunately we don't have the data.

How can you help?

You may be aware of residents in your ward that are struggling financially and we have set up an email address (support.vulnerability@swdevon.gov.uk) for you to refer their details to us.

To help us identify them, please can you provide their name, address and contact telephone number and confirm that you have obtained permission from the resident to pass on their details.

This could be anyone that is struggling financially, they don't have to be pensioners, although we do want to identify all pensioners that may be entitled to PCGC and not currently claiming.

Change NHS

The government has launched 'Change NHS: help build a health service fit for the future' to have the biggest ever conversation about the future of the NHS. Members of the public, as well as NHS staff and health experts will be invited to share their experiences, views and ideas for fixing the NHS via the online platform, change.nhs.uk.

The portal will be live until the start of next year, and available via the NHS App.

People who visit the website can:

- give their views on the NHS and health and care
- tell the government what they feel is working well and what needs improving
- share their experiences
- post their ideas for improving health and care in the future

The public engagement exercise will help shape the government's 10-Year Health Plan, which will be published in Spring 2025 and will be underlined by three big shifts in healthcare - hospital to community, analogue to digital, and sickness to prevention. Please feel free to share this information with residents in your wards and encourage them to get involved.

South Hams Community Awards 2025

The South Hams Community Awards 2025 will open for nominations on Monday 13 January for four weeks. Towns and Parish Councils have also been made aware.

Last year nominations could be made for three categories: Young Persons Award (under 18), Community Champion Award (over 18) and Community Organisation Award. This year a fourth category will be available, Green Award – Climate Champion.

Further information will be available [on our website](#) when nominations open.



Rough sleeping snapshot

Since autumn 2010, all local authorities must submit an annual figure indicating the numbers of people sleeping rough in their area on a typical night. The Government definition of rough sleeping are those people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).



This year our count is going to be an evidence-based estimate including a spotlight count. This means we contact independent partner agencies and internal departments to add to the intelligence held by our Housing Team to have a basis of our estimate. We then verify as much as we can in our hotspot areas by visiting those locations in the early hours of the morning. Our count is taking place on Tuesday 12 November which is a date agreed by all local authorities across Devon and Cornwall. This is to ensure transient customers are not counted more than once. If anyone has any information about rough sleepers they wish to share, or if anyone wants to know more about the process, please contact your District Councillors.

Electoral Register canvass in progress

Every year we check the electoral register to make sure that any resident who is eligible to vote can do so. For residents who have yet to respond to our request to check who in their household is eligible to vote, they will receive a reminder in the post this week. Please encourage your residents to complete the annual canvass so they can have their say at future elections.

