

## **District Councillors' Report to UPC – Alison Dewynter and Victor Abbott Aug 2025**

### **Feedback on Issues Raised by the PC and Residents for action by District Councillor:**

A. N/A

### **News from South Hams DC of note to PC and residents:**

#### **1. Help Shape the Future of Local Government**

SHDC want feedback from residents on what matters the most to them and the communities they live in. This is so that they can develop a more detailed business case for the final proposed plan for local government in this region.

Please attend any of the public engagement sessions in September and October to discuss the current proposal and put your views. All dates and venues at the link below. The closest to Ugborough are Ivybridge on 17 September 2025 at The Watermark, Ivybridge and Ermington on 24 September 2025 at The Crooked Spire, Ermington.

At this link you can find out more about local government reorganisation, book a place at an event and also take part in the on-line survey:

[www.southhams.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation)

#### **2. More information on local government reforms in the England**

There are two main ways that the government is planning to reform local government:

- a. Local Government Reorganisation, which involves replacing the current two-tier system of county and district councils with new unitary authorities that serve larger populations.
- b. Devolution, which involves the transfer of powers and funding from central government to local areas. New regional strategic authorities will be created, each led by an elected Mayor. These authorities will cover areas with populations over 1.5 million in regions of England that do not already have them. Council leaders in Devon have joined forces to call for the creation of a South West Peninsular Mayoral Strategic Authority. More at this press release: [recent joint press release](#).

#### **3. Election – Annual Canvass of residents**

The SHDC election team will complete their annual election canvas in August. They will contact residents by email or letter to ask them to confirm their details. This ensures that they can vote in local and national elections. The email or letter will direct residents to a secure page on the SHDC website. If residents can't respond on-line, they can be sent a paper version to return to the SHDC election team.

#### **4. More support for care leavers and vulnerable groups**

New funding is available through the Household Support Fund to help residents facing financial pressures.

School uniform support: Low-income families can get vouchers worth £60–£150 per child to help with uniform and shoes.

Care leavers living in South Hams will receive £500 in July and another £500 in December 2025.

Carers receiving a Council Tax carers discount will receive £150 payments in both July and December.

Local organisations have been funded to provide practical help with debt advice, budgeting, energy efficiency, and damp and mould issues.

An open application scheme will launch later in the year for residents needing urgent help.

## **5. Help shape plans for Dartmoor National Park**

The [Dartmoor National Park Partnership Plan](#) is being reviewed and Dartmoor National Park Authority are asking for help to shape the new plan.

Messages for residents:

- Dartmoor is a unique, living landscape that needs protecting so it can be enjoyed for generations to come. The [Partnership Plan](#) sets out priorities and actions to do just that – and now it's time to update it.
- Dartmoor National Park Authority and other partners are working together to refresh the Plan. To make it a success, they need input from people who live, work or visit the Park.
- A public survey is now open. It takes around 10 minutes and will help shape the updated Plan, due in 2027 – just in time for Dartmoor's 75th anniversary.

Visit [Your Dartmoor](#) to complete the survey and find out more.

## **6. Postal Vote Renewal**

The Elections Act 2022 introduced changes for voters who applied for a postal vote after 31 Oct 2023. Postal vote applications are now only valid for a maximum of three years and a new application must be made by 31 Jan of the third year.

The quickest and easiest way to reapply for a postal vote is to complete a new application form online at [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote).

As part of the application, electors will be required to provide their: date of birth, national insurance number and a handwritten signature in black ink on plain white paper, either by uploading a photo or a scanned copy

Further information is available at - [www.southhams.gov.uk/elections-and-voting/postal-vote-renewal](https://www.southhams.gov.uk/elections-and-voting/postal-vote-renewal)

## **7. South Hams Dementia Forum**

There was a bit of a mix up over arrangements and advertising of the last meeting. The next will be on 15<sup>th</sup> October at 1pm in the District Council Chamber. In the meantime, perhaps the Parish would consider the introduction of dementia-friendly signage in its public buildings and encourage their deployment in other buildings open to the public.

### **8. Hope Wood**

Volunteers of all ages have helped to plant over 10,000 trees and from November, the second year of planting will see 12,500 trees planted, including broadleaf woodland, wood pasture and orchard trees.

The District Council has supported ParkLife South West, in partnership with South Devon National Landscapes, in harvesting Yellow Rattle seeds planted last year with volunteers and apprentices.

### **9. Visual Arts Survey**

One of the District Council's priorities is to develop an Arts and Culture Strategy for the South Hams. Please promote the 2025 South West Visual Arts survey to all your local arts and culture networks, organisations, groups and individuals in your Wards and communities.

The results of this survey will provide a helpful evidence base for future arts support in West Devon.

Your communities can take part in the survey [here](#).