

District Councillors' Report to UPC – Alison Dewynter and Victor Abbott March 2026

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

A. Fly Tipping

I chased up the fly tipping of slates near the Cheston Railway Bridge. The officer at SHDC replied:

“A report of bags of roofing slates was reported to us on 09/02/2026 by a member of the public, I sent it to the depot on 11/02/2026 and it was cleared on 13/02/2026.

If this is not the case, please accept our apologies and I will investigate.”

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

1. BRIEFINGS FOR PARISH COUNCILLORS AND CLERKS

A planning application within Modbury has highlighted the consequences of recent changes introduced by the government. It proved to be very unsettling to the PC as they interpreted this as undermining the Neighbourhood Plan. It was unsettling to members of the South Hams Development Management Committee too with a high number of abstentions on the vote. To address this issue, you are encouraged to attend a briefing by officers of the DMC for an all-Town and Parish Council Briefing to be held (remotely via MS Teams) on **Thursday, 12 March from 4:00pm to 5:00pm** on the following subject matter: '*The National Planning Policy Framework and its Relationship with Neighbourhood Plans*'.

The South Hams District Council's Executive considered the '*Policy for the Transfer of Community Assets*' at its meeting on 5 March. An MS Teams Briefing will follow on **Thursday, 19 March from 5:45pm to 6:45pm** to which you are invited.

2. Garden Waste Subscriptions now open

With spring approaching, it's time for residents renew their subscription to the South Hams garden waste subscription service.

Messages for residents:

- Early bird renewal will cost £70 for the year if you subscribe before 1 April 2026. The price from 1 April will be £73.
- The new subscription year will run from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2027.
- All you need to do is renew your subscription by card payment on [our website](#).
- The annual cost applies for fortnightly collections, excluding the weeks over the Christmas period when the service is suspended.
- If you have decided not to renew this year, you will no longer receive garden waste collections from 1 April 2026.

3. Fixed Penalty Notices: abandoned vehicles

SHDC have issued their first Fixed Penalty Notices for abandoned vehicles and will continue to act.

Please help share these messages in your communities:

- They're taking enforcement action where necessary against people who abandon their vehicles.
- Abandoning a vehicle is an offence and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act, or further enforcement action.
- Please dispose of vehicles responsibly.

You can report an abandoned vehicle on our website at:

<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/abandoned-vehicles>

4. Budget

The District Council has a reduction in Government funding of around £0.7m (10.1%) for next year, 2026-27. This is despite the Government stating that across the country there has been a 9.6% real terms increase in core spending power over the three-year financial settlement to 2028-29. The Council has set money aside to replace lost grant funding for economic development and to make provisions for investment in coastal defence.

The council argues that changes will disadvantage rural areas such as the South Hams, while urban authorities are set to receive significantly higher levels of support. The council says this approach is “far from fair”. Most urban councils will receive 41% more per head of population in government funding spending power than the most rural councils in 2026/27.

The District has increased the Band D council tax for 2026/27 from £196.66 to £202.54. Households in Bands A, B and C will pay slightly less, while those in higher bands will pay more. This is an increase of £5.88 per year or 11 pence per week in the district council's portion of Council Tax.

The budget proposals include a combination of savings, efficiency measures and potential changes to fees and charges. They also explore opportunities to generate additional income and reduce long-term costs to make sure the organisation continues to operate sustainably in the years ahead. Yet, the council is forecasting a budget shortfall of £2.6m for next year, 2027/28. The council will continue to lobby the Government to recognise the cost of delivering rural services in future finance settlements.

5. Do not throw away lithium batteries

Lithium-ion batteries are found in everyday items such as vapes, phones, laptops, e-scooters and bikes, and children's toys. When thrown in general waste, they can be crushed or punctured during collection.

This damage can cause short-circuiting and overheating, triggering thermal runaway - a chain reaction where a battery releases energy uncontrollably, resulting in fires that burn at extremely high temperatures.

Fires from batteries have been recorded inside collection lorries and at recycling and waste centres. These can cause thousands (even millions) of pounds of damage.

[Find out more on SHDC website.](#)

6. Business Rates Advice and Support

There are some significant changes to Business Rates from 1 April 2026 and the SHDC Business Rates Team is keen to raise awareness and help businesses apply for support, such as rate relief, which may be available.

The Business Rates Team will be offering a drop-in advice service at the Tourism Symposium taking place at Follaton House on Monday 2 March.

The Tourism Symposium isn't a public event, but as the team are keen to help all ratepayers, anyone can come and see them between 10am and 2:30pm. Officers will be on hand to signpost them to the right place.

There is also a dedicated mailbox set up for Revaluation and Business Rates enquiries SW-Revaluation2026@swdevon.gov.uk The team is happy to deal with the enquiry by email or give the business a call to discuss further. Please share with your local businesses.

7. Asset Refurbishment

SHDC are in the process of carrying out a refurbishment project on many assets across the district. This includes resurfacing car parks and the refurbishment of public toilets, bins and benches.

[Click here to download an outline of the works being carried out](#)