

DCC Report for May 25 – June 25
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Could parish council please email with any work they would like me to uptake.

New Councillors have taken their seats and committee and cabinet posts have been filled.

New leader makes vulnerable children and fixing roads two of his 'top priorities'

Our new leader, Councillor Julian Brazil, says that he is 'determined to deliver the very best' for the county's most vulnerable children.

Councillor Brazil (Kingsbridge) made the pledge following his confirmation as the new Leader of DCC at full council last Thursday (22 May), a meeting where he also outlined other top priorities such as fixing Devon's roads.

At the meeting the new members of our cabinet were nominated and confirmed, as was the position of deputy leader.

And to underline the new leadership's commitment to the safeguarding and education of Devon's children, the children's services portfolio will be the responsibility of three cabinet members, who will work closely to improve the outcomes of all children and young people in Devon.

The new cabinet are as follows –

- Cllr Julian Brazil - Leader of the Council
- Cllr Paul Arnott - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Water Quality
- Cllr Denise Bickley - Cabinet Member for Children's Services - SEND
- Cllr James Buczkowski - Cabinet Member for Finance
- Cllr Simon Clist - Cabinet Member for Assets and Resources
- Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin - Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs and Broadband
- Cllr Jacqi Hodgson - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Bio-diversity
- Cllr Richard Jefferies - Cabinet Member for Children's Services - Social Services
- Cllr Richard Keeling - Cabinet Member for Adults Services
- Cllr Dan Thomas - Cabinet Member for Highways

A range of improved support for fully approved Devon foster carers has been agreed by our new ruling Cabinet today (Friday 23 May).

Among the proposals backed by councillors was an annual council tax relief scheme for foster carers in Devon. In line with some other south west authorities, it will entitle carers in the county to claim a payment based on the number of weeks that they provide care to a Devon County Council looked after child.

Payment will be the equivalent of 50% of the Devon County Council element of council tax if foster carers provide more than 26 weeks of care, or 25% for 13-26 weeks of care.

Devon foster carers caring for children aged 16+ will also receive an increase in their weekly allowance, following today's decision by County Councillors to increase payments in line with the National Minimum Allowance (NMA).

The weekly basic fostering allowance to cover the costs of caring for children aged 16+ will rise by £8.96 per week to match the £258 per week National Minimum Allowance (NMA) recommended by Government. This increase will also apply to the allowances paid to carers for children placed under Special Guardianship, Child Arrangement Orders and Adoption Placements. All other age groups will continue to be paid the existing rate of £237.44, which is above the NMA.

In future, all fostering allowances will increase in line with the NMA and/or inflation without the need for Cabinet approval, unless there is a significant financial impact on the Council that could not be met from existing budgets.

Devon County Council's Locality Budgets 2025/26 now Open

Applications for funding to support projects that benefit local communities in Devon can now be submitted. Each County Councillor in Devon has a Locality Budget allocation of £8,000 that they can use in this financial year (until March 2026).

Devon County Council Members can use their Locality Budget to support good causes in the area that they represent such as projects to address loneliness, increase access to healthy activities, help people experiencing food poverty or enhance public spaces.

Applications are accepted from constituted and not-for-private-profit voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector groups and organisations, town and parish councils, charities or businesses (that have an eligible sponsor), or a combination of such groups working together. Refer to the DCC website for more details about who can apply and exclusions.

All projects should include some other financial contribution(s) and/or local support. If you are interested in applying for a contribution from the Locality Budgets please email me.

Kind Regards
Councillor Cathy Connor
Whimble and Blackdown
08/06/2025