

## **Agenda Item 8 - MDDC Report**

### **1 - 31 May**

It was lovely to have a week or so of glorious - possibly a little too hot - weather - but it looks as though we are back to a typical "British Summer". There is a lot going on and much of it is really important to know about - so please take your time to read and digest.

### **Ideas and suggestions**

Mid Devon is looking to celebrate some of the good things that happen. Let me know what is working well for you and might work well across other parishes. I will ensure your ideas are circulate - and acknowledged as yours. At the same time we might be able to raise common issues and even if we can't resolve them, it might help to share.

### **New leader for Mid Devon**

At the Full Council meeting held in May 2026, Cllr David Wulff (Liberal Democrat, Tiverton Castle) was appointed Leader of Mid Devon District Council, succeeding Cllr Luke Taylor.

Cllr Wulff, previously Deputy Leader, has set priorities focused on improving access to council services, supporting residents with cost-of-living pressures, delivering affordable and net zero housing, and protecting the district's rural character and environment.

Cllr Guy Cochran has been appointed Deputy Leader, while Cllr Gordon Czapiewski was re-elected as Chair of the Council, with Cllr Sandy Chenore as Vice-Chair.

### **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

Devon's principal councils are continuing to prepare for the Government's decision on the future shape of local government in Devon, which is expected before the summer parliamentary recess on 16 July. The public consultation on Devon's Local Government Reorganisation proposals closed in March, and the outcome is expected to be announced around the same time. While the final decision remains with Government, councils across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are already working together to prepare for change and to support as smooth a transition as possible.

This preparatory work includes mapping key data on assets, contracts, staffing, software and systems in a common format, so that implementation can move forward once the Government's decision is known. The current indicative timetable includes the creation of new shadow councils following elections in May 2027, with the new councils expected to go live on 1 April 2028. Decisions about how future services will be delivered will ultimately be for those new shadow councils once elected.

### **Community Assets**

We have also heard from a number of parish and town councils interested in taking on community assets that are currently owned and managed by Mid Devon District Council. Expressions of interest can be submitted through the Council's asset transfer webpage by Tuesday 30 June 2026: <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/mid-devon-transfer-of-assets/> If you have

any questions on this please contact Andrew Jarrett Deputy Chief Executive (S151) email [ajarrett@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:ajarrett@middevon.gov.uk)

### **New Visit Mid Devon website launched**

You may have seen that a brand new **Visit Mid Devon website** has recently been launched, designed to act as a “digital front door” for the district. The new site brings together everything in one place—from local events and walks to attractions, heritage sites and independent businesses—making it much easier for both residents and visitors to discover what’s on offer across Mid Devon. It’s simple to use and gives a really good feel for the range of places and experiences available, from our market towns to our rural villages.

As well as helping people plan visits, the site is an important way of supporting our local economy. By showcasing local businesses and attractions in one place, it helps bring in more visitors, encourages people to stay longer, and supports local spend.

**Importantly, local businesses, clubs and community groups - can get involved by adding their own listings or events.** This helps make sure everything happening locally is properly represented and easy for people to find.

It’s well worth having a look—and if you run a group, venue or event locally, please do consider signing up and adding your details.

 <https://www.visitmiddevon.co.uk>

### **National changes to Planning**

Streamlining of local planning decision-making is part of the Government strategy to build 1.5m new homes. Through the Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025\* the Secretary of State has introduced a new scheme of delegation intended to modernise local planning committees by setting out which applications will be delegated and determined by officers (Schedule 1) and which will go to Committee (Schedule 2). The Regulations detail is still to be published. Once received Mid Devon will be required to adopt the National Scheme and update Constitution and Scheme of Delegation.

This new system will start from 30 September 2026 and decisions will be based strictly on application stage evidence and national criteria. District Councillors will no longer be able to ‘call-in’ all applications as they can today. Mid Devon is still to consider whether it will introduce a “triage” system to assess which Schedule 2 applications go to committee.

In parallel with these changes to our approach to decision making, Government is also looking to streamline the appeals process, promoting the use of a fast-track approach to written representations appeals. (Which comprise most appeal decisions)

The new system will require both planning applications and officer reports to be ‘appeal ready’ as the Planning Inspectorate will not consider new plans, reports or late submissions from appellants, interested parties or the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

LPA planning officer planning reports must provide clear, well-reasoned decision notices and supporting documentation, planning conditions and S106 obligations, which must be fully justified.

The new system is designed to 'submit once, submit right', and places a duty upon all to submit their argued case and supporting evidence 'once and right' as there will be no later opportunity. This includes the observations from parish councils as these will contribute to the reports of the LPA planning officer and will be taken forward to any appeal stage.

Where the Planning Committee resolves to overturn officer recommendations, the appeal case is likely to comprise the committee minutes and decision notice. To support this change, the Planning Committee has requested training to ensure the minutes (previously a record of key discussion points only) will provide a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for refusal.

**If a parish council has something to say, then say it at the application stage!** Any comments made by interested parties during the application will be forwarded to and considered by the Inspector when deciding the appeal. Most appeals will be considered through written procedures, known as Part 1 (fast track within 12 weeks), or Part 2 (full written representations, 6-months) which has a very high bar leading to a hearing or inquiry.

More detail will be available once the Regulations are published. Parish Councils are asked to note these national changes to the planning system.

\* Received Royal Assent: 18 December 2025

## **Recycling Update**

**Recycling is becoming more important than ever—not just for the environment, but for the Council's finances too. If all recyclable materials were put in the right bins, we could bring in up to £660,000 extra funding, as well as reduce the cost of landfill.**

At the moment, we receive around **£1.38 million a year** through recycling-related funding, and this will increasingly depend on how well we perform compared to other Devon councils.

Over the coming year, you may notice a few changes to help make recycling easier and more effective. For example, extra recycling will be collected at busy times like Christmas, and there will be more support from officers to help residents get it right. Trials are also planned for new recycling sacks (to help prevent seagull damage), along with potential collections for items like soft plastics and nappies.

Households will also be able to request replacement food waste caddies, and there will be more local campaigns to raise awareness about the *Bin It 1-2-3* system.

All of this is about making recycling simpler, reducing waste, and ensuring we make the most of the resources available to us.

**Mid Devon District Council is pleased to announce the launch of two new schemes to help residents who are struggling with the cost of living - the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), and the Oil Support Scheme.**

The schemes are funded by the Government as part of its response to rising living costs and financial hardship.

**Read the full press release at:**

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/new-financial-support-schemes-now-live-for-mid-devon-residents/>

## **Communications**

Mid Devon District Council

Email: [communications@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:communications@middevon.gov.uk)

## **Funding Opportunity for Local Craftspeople**

The **Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST)** has opened applications for funding to support talented and aspiring craftspeople across the UK.

Grants are available for training and development, including:

- Scholarships up to £18,000
- Emerging Maker Grants up to £10,000
- Apprenticeship funding up to £12,000

Applications close on Monday 12 August at 5pm.

Full details, eligibility criteria and application guidance can be found here:

[Apply for QEST funding](#)

Free online “How to Apply” sessions are also available, offering advice and a chance to ask questions. Registration details can be accessed via the QEST website.

This is an excellent opportunity for anyone considering a career in craft.

If I can be of any assistance please feel free to contact me

Gwen Duchesne MBE

[gduchesne@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:gduchesne@middevon.gov.uk)